

The Freeman

VOL. II. No. 34.

NEW YORK, 3 NOVEMBER, 1920

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CURRENT COMMENT.

HONOURS are easy between Mr. Harding and President Wilson in their recent encounter. Mr. Harding, who may be Presidential timber, but is clearly not seasoned timber—only kiln-dried, maybe—said the other day that France had sent her spokesmen to him, informally asking America to lead the way for an association of nations. The President promptly blew upon him with the breath of his displeasure, intimating a grave affront to the dignity of the French Government in this implication of diplomatic irregularity. Mr. Harding countered with fair effectiveness, exculpating the French Government; meanwhile, the French Embassy in Washington and the French Foreign Office in Paris spoke up for themselves with one accord saying that nothing of the kind had been heard of around those parts and so the incident was closed.

THE only thing about this performance worthy of remark is the President's great display of virtuous horror at the idea that a Government would stoop to do its tampering and huckstering in a foreign country otherwise than through the organized diplomatic channels. Brother Harding has not been long enough in his new line of trade to get himself properly up on its little essential details, so his *naïveté* may be forgiven him. Before he has learned the way around the White House, however, he will discover that delicate uncertainties between Governments, especially those that are in their nature private and confidential, are always negotiated "unofficially." Some military or naval subordinate, or some private person, goes wandering off to the foreign country in question, ostensibly for his health or to see how trade is coming on. Then one day he drifts unobtrusively into a nearby Foreign Office, just as Mr. Wemmick dropped into a church to get married, passes the time of day with the boys, asks "How's tricks?" and after a while makes a casual friendly suggestion of this or that, which he thinks maybe, as far as his own Government is concerned, might be managed. Then if the arrangement falls through, or any news of it leaks out, or popular suspicion is aroused, he is repudiated—and all his works—by his own Government in the magisterial tone which Governments employ when their virtue is impugned—quite the tone of Mr. Wilson's letter to Mr. Harding, in fact. But if nothing untoward happens, his negotiations are in due time recognized, legitimized and baptized as "official."

THE "conversations" of the military and naval experts, seven years before the war, resulting in the secret Franco-British alliance, is a neat example of how the plan works out when everything goes favourably. Mr. William C. Bullitt's mission to Soviet Russia is a capital specimen of what happens when there is a hitch or a breakdown. To show that the reading public of New York is presumed to be as naïve as Mr. Harding himself, the papers which featured the Harding-Wilson correspondence reported, side by side with it on the same page, the case of certain members of the League to Enforce Peace who have been going abroad lately—one of them is still abroad—to interview members of foreign Governments with regard to the entrance of the United States into the League of Nations!

THE French Government knows as well as all other Governments know, that nothing but an interposition of what Mrs. Malaprop called an unscrupulous Providence can keep Mr. Harding out of the Presidency. It is incalculably to the interest of the French Government, as to that of the British Government and to all debt-ridden imperialist Governments the world over, that the United States shall enter the League of Nations. There is nothing surprising about this; if we had as many debts that needed underwriting and as many nefarious and shaky enterprises that needed propping, we would feel quite as anxious as they do. Hence to suppose that any reactionary European Government is letting grass grow under its feet while making its "unofficial" way to Senator Harding, or rather, probably, to his entourage, is evidence of the same sanguine optimism that expects to catch a weasel asleep. This paper does not, of course, undertake to pass upon the merits of this little controversy between Mr. Wilson and Mr. Harding. What we do object to, however, is their posing of the supremely silly convention that Governments go about their connivings in any manner other than that which they always employ.

IF Adam Smith reads regularly the celestial edition of the *New York Times*, as we have faith to believe he does, he must have stroked his spiritual chin with merriment when he came across the story of Mr. John Skelton Williams's recent revelations, and the all-too-excited rebuttal of the American Bankers' Association. The Comptroller of the Currency has testified that some of the New York banks are lending money at rates that run all the way up to thirty per cent—a portion of their funds having been borrowed, in the first instance, from the Federal Reserve, at a maximum rate of six per cent. Mr. Williams has poured out any quantity of figures in proof of his story, so that it has now all the semblance of gospel truth. If the matter had been allowed to drop after a few personal protests from the denizens of Wall Street, we might have lived on in the happy belief that the usurious practices to which Mr. Williams refers are not widespread. But, strangely enough, the Comptroller's utterances have been viewed with alarm by the National Bankers' Association, in convention assembled at Washington. And in fact the whole blooming organization seems to be in flight where no man pursueth.

IF the money-changers wish to have Mr. Williams's statements stand as an accusation against "the integrity of America's bankers as a whole," that is, of course, more their business than ours. After all, we are not so much interested in the reputation of American banking, as in

the general condition of American business to which this affair has given publicity. The establishment of legal limitations upon the charges of the money-lenders was favoured by Adam Smith himself—and he did not exactly go in for the governmental regulation of economic affairs. The maximum rate of interest should not be extortionately high, the good economist said, because if it was, gamblers and all sorts of profligate folk would be the only people who could afford to borrow, and capital would thus be diverted from production into goodness knows what mischief. This sounds like common sense; just as Mr. Williams's statements sound like the truth. Putting two and two together, we come to the alarming conclusion that the competition which raises interest-rates to such an exorbitant figure in the Street is a competition, not of producers, but of gamblers. And these gamblers not only do the producers the disservice of putting credit beyond their reach, but they must make winnings that more than balance the interest they pay—for otherwise the frolic could not go on.

We are not attempting here to analyse the ultimate function of banking and credit, any more than Mr. Williams was, when he made his revelations. Nor shall we attempt to choose between the gentlemen who manage to lend money at thirty per cent, and their friends who can afford to borrow at this rate. But as between this bi-cameral crew and the rest of the country, we know well enough where our allegiance lies. The costs of the imperial gambling-game are paid by the spectators; and because the game is prospering just now, the gamblers have bid credit up so high that the rest of the people can not get money to move crops, or build houses, or carry on any of their other more or less legitimate affairs. At this late day, the bankers are just preparing a scheme for breaking the cotton-jam by financing shipments to Europe on long-term credit. For this reason, or for some other one more abstruse, cotton is already gaining in the market. The promise of American bankers to advance funds to the Cuban Government for use in financing the sugar crop has had a similar effect on the price of sugar. This power of the financiers to expand and contract markets and raise and lower prices is something that Adam Smith could never have come in contact with here on earth. But in the last analysis it is this power that creates most of the uncertainties of the Street, with its gamblers' chances and its ruinous interest-rates.

Thus the fate of the producer, and that of the consumer too, must depend largely upon an utterly unreal state of supply and demand. When the controllers of credit give thought to a particular product, they can fit the demand, or market, to any dimension they desire. And just as there is a whimsical and tricky market for each particular product, so there is also an unstable market for money, which reflects, after a fashion, the state of all the particular commodity-markets; and the fluctuations in this money-market may force the producer to throw his supply on sale, at a time when the market for his special product is particularly bad. Thus it may happen that at a time when gambling is particularly lively and interest particularly high, the producer may be forced to sell at a price that is particularly low. The whole thing seems to move pretty much in a circle: control of credit, by itself, gives a partial control of markets; this control of demand introduces an artificial element of chance into a situation otherwise fairly stable, and thus promotes gambling; when gambling is generally lively, there is a scarcity of money, and the interest-rates are ruinously high; when interest is high, the producer must either dump his supply into the existing market, or destroy part of it in order to better the price of the remainder (as the cotton farmers have been doing), or beg the controllers of credit to create a wider demand (as the farmers in general are doing); and the bankers may grant the request or not, as they please. Credit-control of demand creates gambling; gambling

creates high interest; and high interest forces supply into the market and multiplies the power of credit-control. In the long run the position of the bankers in economic affairs becomes very much like that of diplomats in matters of State; both are equally irresponsible, while year in and year out the bankers seem to have rather more power for good and evil.

For goodness knows how long, the *New York Times* has been publishing in one of the rearward sections of each Sunday's issue a two- or three-column lament upon the sad state of the Russian commonwealth. The weekly output of this stuff is so large that we can seldom manage to go far enough to learn what is the latest "opinion of well-informed observers," as revised in accordance with "the viewpoint of officials high in governmental circles," who get their hunches, in turn, from "sources vouched for by the highest authority"—the observers, the officials and the "highest authority" being all as safely anonymous as the veiled prophet himself. However, we have somehow managed this week to conquer our distaste for this kind of thing, and to read the latest jeremiad through to the end, and great was our reward. We have discovered that persons who have considered the situation carefully are now convinced that foreign invasion makes for centralization in Russia. This is said with specific reference to the Polish war, but there seems to be no good reason why official Washington should not extend the same thought to cover the case of Baron Wrangel—after he too has been defeated.

BETTER still, we learn that Mr. Bainbridge Colby himself extends his favour to the peasant communes which will, perhaps, take on more authority when the removal of external pressure makes decentralization possible. It is not to be inferred from this that the Secretary of State has been converted to agricultural communism. He hopes rather that the peasants will eventually see fit to restore a regime of private property and political—not economic—centralization. In the words of this Washington dispatch, "the formation of these peasant communities is found by officials from their confidential reports to contain the essentials of a great political and social transfiguration." We agree—although we should like to give some credit also, to those self-governing industrial groups that played so large a part in the earlier stages of the revolution. Like Mr. Colby—who now finds himself in partial agreement with Prince Kropotkin—we should like to see these local groups come into possession of more power. And we will trust the communistic training of the peasants before the revolution, and of the industrial workers since, to prevent the proprietarian and political restoration upon which Mr. Colby sets all his hopes.

THE coal strike in Great Britain is enough to make a granite statue weep. It is only by stoking up an interest in the arts and stratagems of political government that we can raise the temperature of our spirits by even a couple of calories. Strategically, the encounter between the Ministry and the miners has been a pretty thing to watch: not since the closing days of the war has there been anything so neat as the manner in which the Whitehall brigade sapped the original position of the miners, cut off the liaison with the consumers in the little matter of the fourteen shilling reduction, and wellnigh won outright acceptance of a policy thoroughly detested by the British trade unions, that of "payment-by-results." This strategy pretty well cleared the ground of both rational, political purposes and economic principles, and by the time the second strike-vote was taken, the fight had been transformed into just the sort of bout which Brother George is capable of conducting with his eyes blindfolded and one of his hands tied. What could the miners expect in such a contest but a good, sound trouncing? While they were concentrating their forces on this particular wage-battle they were losing a much bigger campaign.

WHEN one thinks of all the vantages British labour has thrown into Brother George's lap during the last three months it is hard to see how the Prime Minister can help being the sort of Christian who loves his enemies and blesses them that hate him. What a pickle his Ministry would have been in if the coal miners had not jumped to the rescue! In India, Mesopotamia, Poland, and the Crimea nothing that the Government had undertaken was running according to schedule and plan; whilst in England itself the growing resentment among employers against the new budget was equalled only by the lively feelings of satisfaction with which the workers looked forward to a winter dignified by road-making, bread-lines, and resolutions on behalf of the unemployed. Above all, there was Ireland. The only person who has kept pretty cheerful about Ireland through thick and thin is Sir Edward Carson: for six months the British public's distaste for the sort of Law and Order that Sir Hamar Greenwood had inflicted on Ireland has been growing steadily. Lately, even Mr. Asquith called attention to the loud and unmistakable odour that has blown over the Channel from Cork and Balbriggan; even an old crony like Lord Grey publicly put his handkerchief up to his nose; even Lord Robert Cecil—the Cecils are always urbane!—said that the air was not quite fresh. It would have been a delicate job to go before the people on the Irish question without spoiling the chances of a Coalition majority, and yet without a general election, or without some fresh political triumph, nothing short of a pulmotor and regular strychnine injections could probably have kept the Coalition alive.

THUS, the opportunity which the coal strike offered the Government was, doubtless, too good to be refused, even with a little temporary inconvenience; it was all that was needed to make the Coalition's tin medals of prestige look nice and bright again. As soon as the stick the miners were using to beat the Government with had been whittled down to a wage-issue, Whitehall's campaign was as good as won: the political danger of the coal strike had been averted: for the Government remained the Government, and when all was said and done the Government remained on top. Nothing so serious as a confiscation of rents or royalties was even breathed about in the "friendly conferences" the Government arranged between the coal-owners and the miners. Output was the State's interest; wages, the miners'. What then could come out of the settlement except campaign fuel for an "appeal to the people"—much better campaign fuel than the stinking peat the Government had lighted in Ireland.

THE recent Financial Conference at Brussels disclosed the interesting fact that each of the States represented at that meeting is now devoting, on the average, about twenty per cent of its national expenditures to preparations for war. Faced with such figures the Conference affirmed with emphasis: "that the world can not go on supporting such an expenditure and that it is only by a policy of complete and frank co-operation that the nations of the world can hope to regain their former prosperity. For such a restoration it is essential that all nations should employ the whole of their national wealth on expenditure of a strictly productive nature." This is to the point and is well put, and yet while that admirable resolution was being passed, British armament firms were openly taking orders from Japan, Holland and other foreign Powers for new dreadnaughts and military equipment. If the gentlemen at Brussels mean what they say they would do well to follow up the expression of their views with a little appropriate action tending to the peaceful persuasion of our governments to "employ the whole of their national wealth on expenditure of a strictly productive nature." This of course would mean nothing less than international disarmament. Is it possible that our bankers are turning into pacifists and are going to turn out the military cliques and armament rings that now control the policies of our politicians?

WHEN our Government can recover "by sales and transfers of materials" as much as \$9,400,000 from an enterprise which three years ago cost nearly \$80,000,000, the simple taxpayers should be duly thankful. For that is the way it stands with the Old Hickory powder plant at Jacksonville, Tenn., which the perspicacious Nashville Industrial Corporation has lately picked up for a trifle of \$3,000,000 in the Government's famous bargain basement in Washington, D. C. But those of us who have no stock in the Nashville Industrial Corporation should not complain at the terms of the bargain. After all, what is one such deal among so many, and have we not the satisfaction of knowing that autocracy, of the monarchical kind at any rate, has been overthrown, for the time being at least, in Austria and in Germany. And, moreover, even if we have spent a pretty penny in putting down Prussianism in Germany, to say nothing of banditry in Haiti, we may take comfort in the knowledge that our far-seeing Government has reserved for its future use in case of emergency certain essentials in powder-making at Jacksonville. It is to be hoped that all foreigners will take due warning; for it is clear that whatever we taxpayers may think about it, military authorities do not mean to be caught napping when the time comes to lend a hand in the next war to end war.

THE city population of the United States has now for the first time passed the rural population, and stands in excess of the latter by about four million, according to the Government's figures. Moreover, the cities are increasing in population seven and one-half times as fast as the rural districts. In the State of Ohio, whence come the presidential candidates, there are 60,000 fewer men and boys on the farms than there were last year. If this movement keeps up, another generation will have forgotten what farm-land is for. We should like to hear a discussion of this tendency, based on premises a little more respectable than the loneliness of farm-life, the lure of the city, and the usual run of reasons given to show why the boys leave the farm; reasons which in point of insight and intelligence, are most unimpressive. As a starting-point for such a discussion, we would suggest the Government's statistics of agricultural land-values, its statistics of tenant-farming, and a general study of agricultural credit. These points would do very well to begin with, and when the discussion has passed beyond them, we can suggest a few more.

THE death of Terence MacSwiney, the Lord Mayor of Cork, after a seventy-three day hunger-strike, adds yet another name to the tragic list of Irish martyrs. To countless Americans, MacSwiney's long struggle in a London jail has dramatized in terms of life and death Ireland's bitter fight against English domination. His struggle has appealed to the humanity and love of liberty of the average American—the more so it must be added, because it occurred outside his national boundaries. He has thus been given a fine opportunity to vent his moral indignation without any uncomfortable searchings of heart. For this reason, MacSwiney's death will react upon American sentiment as the death of Debs or Larkin from the same cause could not possibly react, simply because a foreign Government—not the American—is responsible for it. But the bitterness and anger which it is bound to arouse in Ireland and throughout the Empire and in this country will be visited sooner or later on the British people.

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It is not to be understood that articles signed with a name, pseudonym, or initials necessarily agree with the opinion of the editors, either as to substance or style. They are printed because, in the editors' judgment, they are intrinsically worth reading.

Editors—Francis Neilson and Albert Jay Nock. Associate editors—Van Wyck Brooks, Walter G. Fuller, Clara La Follette and Gerold Robinson. Published weekly by THE FREEMAN, Inc., B. W. Huebsch, President, 116 West 13th Street, New York, N. Y. Subscription rates, per year, postpaid; in the United States and Mexico, \$6.00; in Canada, \$6.50; elsewhere, \$7.00. Copyright, 1920, by The Freeman, Inc., 3 September, 1920. Vol. II No. 34. Entered as second-class matter 12 March 1920 at the post-office at New York, N. Y., under the act of 3. March, 1879.

TOPICS OF THE DAY.

ABOUT IT AND ABOUT.

ACCORDING to promise, the League of Nations is featured up to the last as the only issue of the campaign. The Republican and Democratic parties, being merely two aspects of the same bi-partisan political interest, have precious good reasons for not broaching a real issue, there being no real issue between them, and have, therefore, tacitly agreed upon the League of Nations as the particular cotton doughnut towards which popular attention shall, as far as possible, be distracted. Hitherto, no one has cared much about the League of Nations; our people did not effervesce over it during the long wrangle in the Senate, nor does it seem to catch their imagination even yet. Mr. Cox is swinging around the circle in its behalf, while Mr. Harding harangues upon it to the brethren as they sit at his feet, consuming burgoo, and basking in the genial sun of Indian summer. Editors, spellbinders, politicians and all-in-general who have nothing very useful to do, are manfully drumming up the League of Nations to the proportions of a major issue; but in spite of all these praiseworthy endeavours, the campaign has been uncommonly languid and there is every prospect of a light vote.

One great trouble with all these *Ersatz*-issues that are dragged in for political service, is that no one dare sift them to the bottom. Spellbinders, politicians and editors have to be extremely careful to keep on their surface; and this throws an air of fictitiousness and unreality over their appearance, which rather puts one's interest and confidence off key. That was the trouble with the sound-money issue; that was the trouble for all the years that the tariff was the "paramount issue." Discussion of the tariff had to be kept on the plane of "the protection of our infant industries" until our industries grew so large that even the politicians had not the face to work that fraud any longer; they turned then to "the protection of the American working-man," "the foreigner pays the tax," and so on.

As one detached and frivolous pretext after another became threadbare and went into the rag-bag, the spellbinders, politicians and editors tackled the next with the same assiduous energy and undiminished resources of spurious profundity; but any question more fundamental was never for a moment permitted. At no time during this long period could you have inveigled a single mother's son of them into a discussion of the fundamental economics of the tariff. You can not do it even now. Try it, not on the paid or partisan advocate, but on even the best of American free-trade liberalism—or British, either, for that matter—taking your thesis straight from the dead hand of Richard Cobden, without gloss or emendation, and see what you get! You will be met with stark silence, silence which you can not break by argument, entreaty, ridicule or insult. Try it, and see!

If we are now to go through the consummate farce of accepting the League of Nations as a serious issue, it seems the least that the editors and spellbinders can do, to discuss it with some plausible approximation to seriousness; and this they are not doing. Who can care two straws about Mr. Harding's fourteen vote-catching tergiversations or Mr. Cox's palterings over this or that "reservation" which he would not find objectionable? These men are candidates, office-seekers—*verbum sat sapienti*. But who can be more interested in the discussions carried on by the editors and spellbinders, by Dr. Eliot, Mr. Root, Mr. Wickersham or Mrs. Catt? One feels, indeed, more

or less humiliated by the patronizing explanations and interpretations, especially concerning Article X, that are shovelled in on one's intelligence from every side. Anyone not actually illiterate should be adjudged able, and if let alone, is quite able, to make up his own mind upon simple questions of fact. The commitment in Article X presumably means what it says; if so, it needs no interpreting. If there be any ambiguity about it, no amount of interpretation will serve to keep down, in a fair mind, the previous question, why any such ambiguity is there. But this is precisely the kind of question that is never even raised, let alone discussed.

Are Mr. Cox's league and Mr. Harding's "association" two names for the same thing? Is any league into which the United States can enter, either under Mr. Harding's auspices or Mr. Cox's, anything but a device for promoting, without the risk and cost of war, the existing economic system of exploitation? Is it in any sense a league of nations, or merely a league of Governments? What is the record of those Governments? Upon what grounds, precisely, do they command confidence? What influences control them? Judged by results, how much have they contributed, so far, to the general welfare of the world? Have they done well enough to justify anyone in recommending a closer and more powerful association among them?

Such are some of the questions that we should like to hear discussed. We would much rather hear them argued and defended than listen to any amount of interpretations and explanations. We believe that a first-rate case could be made out for the thesis that the charter of any league contemplated by either Mr. Cox or Mr. Harding, is nothing but a letter of marque for imperialism, committing the powerful assistance of the United States in upholding the existing economic system, which, in other parts of the world, has failed greatly since the war, and without some such support as is now proposed must shortly break down. We believe it might be shown that such an association would not be in any sense a league of nations, but of Governments; and of Governments which have unfailingly maintained an anti-social character.

What embarrassment could come from candid talk about these matters? If there are sinister interests behind the move for a league of nations and the whole thing at bottom is mere rascality, then the sooner we know it, the better, and there should be little trouble about making it known in a convincing way. If, on the other hand, it is a purely humanitarian and disinterested plan for the world's welfare, there should be no trouble at all about demonstrating it as such. But nothing will be known as long as nobody dips below the surface of the issue. Senator Reed has spoken out, and presumably can give chapter and verse for what he says; why not put forward Mr. Root to refute him? The New York *Globe* is holding a symposium on the issue; why might it not invite, say, Mr. Amos Pinchot and Mr. Bainbridge Colby to contribute a discussion on the real fundamentals of the League? This would be a great service. If Mr. Reed and Mr. Pinchot got the better of it, the air would be cleared of an immense amount of cant and buncombe, and we could all hold up our heads and breathe freer. If Mr. Root and Mr. Colby won their case, it would go far to restore confidence in political government; a confidence which, outside the United States and Japan, has, the world over, become notably uncertain and decrepit. Friends of the league-idea are glad to defend it; so they should be. Opponents of the idea are ready to strike it down whenever it appears; and

so they should be. What we plead for is that both sides should undertake their championships on fundamental grounds, and that the attention of the country should no longer be frittered away, and its intelligence bemocked and affronted by unending superficiality.

THROUGH THE PRESS, DARKLY.

"WHAT do you think of that—and that—and that?" the hero of one of Johann Bojer's novels asks himself as he sits in the seclusion of a little Paris café and catches the tumult of London and Barcelona and Kiev and Washington echoing through the metropolitan newspapers. In New York this is the sort of question which people who are professionally committed to forming opinions about the day's news find themselves asking from morning to morning in preparation for the gleam, the ray of light, the intellectual sunburst which finally gets set up as an editorial paragraph or leader. By itself the question is sobering enough in all conscience, but unfortunately another thought of even more cadaverous aspect pussyfoots close on its heels: "What the deuce do I really know about that—and that—and that?" Frequently the answer to this leaves one feeling like a patent-medicine hawker who has had his wares inspected by a chemical analyst. The intellectual content of our daily opinions is so very doubtful—and so much of the virtue lies in the wrapper.

The literacy of the modern community, with its abject dependence upon printed reports and opinions that are received often at third and fourth remove, is appalling. The old-fashioned theory of democracy rested on the assumption that any common citizen might personally acquire sufficient knowledge to form a considered judgment about the conduct of public affairs. But it has become pretty plain by now that knowledge of this kind can hardly be acquired even by those who have all the obvious sources of information concentrated at their command in a great metropolis and who spend a good part of their waking hours in sifting it. During the last couple of centuries the intellectual foundations of our current opinions seem to have shifted, and we are now increasingly at the mercy of observers and reporters whose capacities can not be estimated, whose biases can not be allowed for, and whose dishonesties and ineptitudes can never be brought to book. What a pretty mess is bound to come out of this a glance at the political developments of the last generation clearly reveals. It may be worth considering a little what actually is this "knowledge" which universal elementary education and popular journalism inflicts upon the world. The answer may show why it has suddenly come to seem so "ornery" and dangerous.

In one of William James's essays a discreet comparison is made between "knowledge about" and "acquaintance with." The first is the remote, external apprehension of things which one gets through the medium of words and symbols; the second is the thick, intimate experience which one acquires by living contact. Before our so-called era of communication, before the printing press and the cable, when people were ignorant and signed their names with a cross and generally did not know much more than how many beans make five, it is fairly safe to assert that "acquaintance with" counted for more than "knowledge about." In mediæval times, a man would know something about the things he had seen, heard, smelled, felt, and tasted and unless he were a hermit or a theologian or a professional liar he would not pretend to know very much about anything he had not come by in this fashion.

Essentially because reading and writing were not the chief means by which the mediæval environment was controlled there was little temptation to deal with any other province except that which came immediately under observation in the course of work or travel. There was plenty of gullibility and superstition under these conditions, beyond doubt: but in the main this was ignorance of an innocent sort, and except in the hands of literate ecclesiastics it probably did not have the fertility in producing mischief which we are accustomed to attribute to it. Indeed in many cases superstition marks the beginning of knowledge, in the same way that alchemy marks the beginning of chemistry. The world of "acquaintance with" was a rule-of-thumb world. But the thumb was a real thumb, and as far as experience fell within its narrow limits it was genuine experience. The "knowledge" of non-existent things was reserved for another world—where it might work.

Ever since print and paper were introduced in Europe the "knowledge about" method has been growing at the expense of "acquaintance with." The reasons for this are rooted in both personal and social conditions. From the standpoint of the individual it is sufficiently obvious that acquiring other people's experiences is a cheaper way of getting hold of them than by seeking them for one's self, and besides the economy in time, energy, thought, and—in a word—life, the multiplicity of people and places that is revealed by the printed word has the sensation of extending the range of one's own limited personal environment.

Up to the time of Caxton the only way in which the common man could transcend his limitations, except by actually stirring himself and going on a journey, was by shifting his mental gears into a world of dreams. The printing-press opened up a province as remote and as unrelated to his daily life as the world of dreams, and yet the domain of the printed word had the authentic stamp of reality! The stimulus to compass one's life in this easy fashion through other people's experiences was provided by the change which took place in the social transition from mediæval to modern times. It would be a glorious task for some scholar to correlate the introduction of printing, the settlement of a bureaucracy in the capital city, the growth of the national State, the beginnings of a "national" literature largely emanating from the capital city, the social, intellectual and material impoverishment of the provinces, and the pullulation of the greater "knowledge-about" world in which we live to-day. At a glance all these facts seem to knit significantly together and create a new pattern of a paperized society!

As the warm sunrise of the thirteenth century faded into the pale clarity of the Renaissance and as this in turn was overcast by the turbid clouds of the industrial revolution the immediate regional environment apparently became increasingly limited and sterile, the nutritive elements were leached out of the countryside and absorbed in the tumorous growth of the great cities, and the number of people who could acquire by direct contact an acquaintance with the new world of politics and business was progressively reduced. Book-learning became at one and the same time a refuge from the reality of the modern world and a means of conquering it. The "acquaintance-with" method was reduced to the expensive futility of sight-seeing.

For the last century the "knowledge-about" world has been filled with a blather of congratulation over its fertility in spawning books, pamphlets, magazines, newspapers, cablegrams, documents, advertisements, and what not. To the student of social history, however,

it is as plain as day that in the transition from mediæval to modern times, and from an "acquaintance-with" to a "knowledge-about" attitude something was gained and something was lost. The notion that there has been any appraisable net gain is probably an illusion derived from looking only at one column in the ledger. Enough has been said, and will continue to be said, about the advantages, the blessings, and the virtues of the modern world. We are in the act of balancing up accounts a bit by picking out certain little items on the debit side, and we have callously taken for granted all that may be properly said about the development of the sciences and the fascinating network of impersonal relationships and contacts all over the planet by which the sciences have grown and advanced. When all is said and done the folk who write editorials and read newspapers are not scientists, and their "knowledge-about" world has the substance and integrity of a house of cards erected by a fumbling infant.

The danger lies not at all in the fact that the busy, uncritical majority are forced to "know about" so many things, but that—as the inevitable Artemus says—"they know so many things that ain't so." The method would work all right if the materials were honest, and if we had enough experience in handling the materials to register some concrete image each time, let us say, the words "Petrograd," or "State Department" or "coal strike" or "Mexico" are dropped into our minds. How we are to vivify, materialize, and establish the "knowledge-about" world in which we come to find ourselves so inextricably involved is the dreadful problem that makes a solitary newspaper so unusually thick with blue devils. When all the historic accounts are squared there precisely lies the nub of our problem. Anyone who tries to cope with the flood of lies, partial truths, mistaken observations, and downright propaganda that seeps into our system every morning with the newspapers knows what a hefty problem it is. Academic education stiffens our resistance to falsehood a little—a hair of the dog that bites!—travel perhaps does even more, occupational experience helps, and a few months in a newspaper office is an antitoxin which makes one immune to almost anything that's printed—even the whole truth. But in spite of due preparation and precaution one's timidity increases. And each day we look at the day's news, as it leaps at us from Paris and Petrograd and Copenhagen and Cockaigne we feel less in the mood of asking with Bojer's hero: "What do we think about that?" More and more we halt and inquire: "What on earth do we really *know*?"

LENIN'S PURGE.

NIKOLAI LENIN, that terror of half the world and hope of the other half, is widely credited by what he would call the "capitalist press" with having overreached himself in his eagerness to become dictator of a communized Europe—or indeed of a communized world. The twenty-one conditions of adherence to the Third Internationale, formulated at its second congress in Moscow, in July of this year, are popularly termed "Lenin's twenty-one conditions," and the fact that their revolutionary tone has frightened away many good Socialists in all countries who were nibbling at the Moscow bait, is taken to presage a great Socialist debacle and the ruin of Lenin's cherished dreams.

It is not surprising that those advertising broadsheets which serve us for newspapers should administer liberal doses of this soothing-syrup. Unlike most of the grist that comes to the anti-"red" mill, it has every appearance of being the real thing. Ever

since the formation of the Third or Communist Internationale in Moscow a year ago last March, and the publication of its manifesto summoning the masses to revolt, there has been a bitter internecine war going on among the Socialist groups of every country, with the result that where before there were merely conservative and radical wings within each organization, there are now, in practically every case, two separate and distinct bodies: the one tending to become more liberal or "bourgeois" in character; while the other faces towards Moscow and the Left. But it should be noted that the Third Internationale was not the primary cause of this separation. It merely offered the occasion for its completion. The split in the Socialist ranks began in 1914 when, with the beginning of the war, European Socialism divided into two groups, the "Social-patriots" who supported their warring governments, and the uncompromising internationalists who opposed the war.

For more than a year now, the question of joining or repudiating the Third Internationale has been the paramount issue among Socialists of every country, and the success or failure of the bolshevist experiment in Russia seems to have been tacitly accepted as the criterion by which the Third Internationale was to be judged. Delegations of Socialists have been sent to Russia from other countries, presumably with the purpose of judging communism by its fruits. The German delegation, sent by the Independent Socialists, split evenly on the issue; Dauming and Stöcker reporting in favour of adherence to Moscow, while Crispian and Dittman reported against it. The action of the party is recent history. Its convention at Halle, on 16 October, voted to join the Third Internationale. The minority, which had favoured merely a declaration of sympathy with Russia, then withdrew, and it may be assumed that their withdrawal betokens a split in the ranks of the Independents.

The French Socialist party sent two delegates to Russia, Frossard and Cachin, both of whom have reported in favour of joining the Third Internationale. Their report has not yet been voted upon, but it appears likely that there will be a division of the party on the issue, much as the German Independents have divided. A good deal of importance has been attached by our newspapers to the repudiation of the Third Internationale by the *Confédération Générale du Travail*, but it should be noted that while the *Confédération* has refused to adhere as a body, many of its members are also members of the Socialist party and as such will become members of the Internationale if the party adopts the recommendation of its delegates.

The Italian Socialist party has been affiliated with Moscow from the first, but a disagreement as to purposes and methods between the moderate and extreme elements became evident during the recent revolutionary strike, and Lenin's condemnation of the moderate element is likely to bring about actual division in the near future.

English Socialism, in the main, still stands safely and conservatively for the Second Internationale. In Austria, it is significant that the Christian Socialists, the Roman Catholic group, won the recent general elections, while Lenin's "twenty-one points" seem to have called forth a good deal of resentment among those Socialists who had leaned towards the Moscow Internationale. The Executive Committee of the Swiss Socialist party has answered Moscow by withdrawing its previous adherence to the Internationale, but the membership may overrule this action when it comes to a vote. The Norwegian Socialists, fearing a division on the issue, have just asked the Executive Com-

mittee of the Internationale for permission to delay the special party convention which was to decide it.

In short, Socialism is at war with itself in practically every country. The superficial facts certainly justify Lenin's enemies in their rejoicings. But is it not possible that this situation quite suits Lenin's purposes? The Moscow leaders, whatever may be thought of their philosophy and methods, have shown themselves to be intelligent and able strategists. It is altogether unlikely that they failed to estimate the full affect of the uncompromising conditions which they offered to Western Socialism. Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, one of the conservative Socialist leaders of Britain, has characterized them thus:

The Moscow leaders are men of definite opinions. . . . They are no fireside revolutionaries. . . . When they say dictatorship they mean dictatorship; when they say revolution they mean bloodshed and violence; when they speak of universal laws they mean that Great Britain is included in the universe.

If one examines the manifesto of the Third Internationale, one will be inclined to agree with Mr. Macdonald. Here is a definite declaration of war on non-revolutionary Socialism:

. . . the war of 1914 has killed the Second Internationale by proving that, dominating the fraternal masses of the workmen, stood parties transformed into the cringing organs of the bourgeois State. . . . The fight against the Socialist Centre is a necessary factor in the fight against imperialism.

In repudiating the vacillation, mendacity, and superficiality of the Socialist parties, we—the united Communists of the Third Internationale—feel ourselves to be the direct successors of a long series of generations, heroic champions and martyrs; . . . it is the Third Internationale that stands for the open action of the masses and for revolutionary operations.

In the preamble to the twenty-one conditions formulated by the Second Congress one finds this explicit statement:

The Communist Internationale might be menaced by the invasion of unreliable elements noted for their half-way methods and not yet free of the ideology of the Second Internationale. Furthermore, in some of the great parties . . . which have Communist majorities there remain large reformist and pacifist groups which only wait the occasion to raise their heads again, to begin the active sabotage of the proletarian revolution and so help the bourgeoisie and the Second Internationale. No Communist should forget the lessons of the Hungarian Soviet Republic. The amalgamation of the Hungarian Communists with the reformists cost the Hungarian proletariat dear.

Viewed in the light of these two documents, the present struggle in the ranks of Socialism throughout the world takes on a new significance. The Third Internationale is no love-feast. It is a revolutionary body and it knows what it wants—the destruction of the existing social order. Its temper is as ruthless as that of any of the Governments it is out to overthrow, and its attitude towards the moderate Socialists who are willing to compromise with those Governments is one of implacable hostility—they may “sabotage the revolution.” It is committed to the class-struggle, and it softens the hard words of Marxian prophecy with no interpretative commentaries.

It seems fairly evident, then, that the extremist tactics of the Left are consciously intended to disrupt the body of organized Socialism. Their object—as they themselves have stated it—is to discard those elements which show any hesitation about going the whole way of proletarian revolution, and to form a determined, working minority, ready to put through, at any cost, the establishment of proletarian dictatorship. A working minority—there is the crux of the matter. “ . . . The Communist party can fulfil its function only if organized in most centralized fashion, if con-

trolled by iron military discipline, and if the party executive, armed with large powers, exercises untested authority and has the unanimous confidence of the active membership.” These Communists have observed that the minority “bourgeois” governments somehow get things done. They have seen a strong minority in Russia defending the revolution against practically the whole world. On the other hand, they have seen majority Socialist parties take over the machinery of the political State and in consequence become conciliatory and impotent. They have deduced from all this that minority rule, somehow, works; and that rule by the majority is likely to fail because the Government is kept constantly busy conciliating all parties. The Communists are out for proletarian government; but their method is that of action by a powerful, cohesive, determined minority.

Whether or not these extremists have a very clear idea what they will do with power when they get it, is another question. Whether their getting it will be a good thing or a bad thing is, at present, merely a matter of opinion. But whatever one may think of this steady movement towards revolutionary action, one must at least recognize that it is there, and that it is gaining, not losing, power. It is a mistake to suppose that Nikolai Lenin is destroying socialism. He may be helping to destroy socialism as we have known it hitherto; but he is forging—or, rather, the Third Internationale is forging—a compact, revolutionary minority, sure of its end, seeking and giving no quarter, and ready to fight with weapons of the flesh as well as of the spirit, “the revolutionary fight for the power and dictatorship of the proletariat.”

AU-DESSOUS DE LA MÊLÉE.

“EVEN what is best in American life is compulsory—the idealism, the zeal, the beautiful unison of its great moments,” writes George Santayana in his new book, “Character and Opinion in the United States.” And this perceiving and discriminating critic goes on to imply that in the intellectual life of this country, too, the dice of thought is loaded; loaded in favour of Protestant morality.

Now, in spite of the sound justice in this observation—and who would have the temerity to challenge it?—the chief compulsion in our intellectual life, as it actually exists to-day, might be described as the moral obligation to be optimistic. In a prosperous, expanding, self-confident, Western civilization such as our own, this unspoken compulsion has, of course, a certain utility-value. The tone of ordinary social intercourse could hardly rest on any other set of assumptions without unsettling the whole fabric of relationships. But this command to be optimistic is more subtly pervasive. Art and literature wither in too persistently fruitful a sun, yet in America they must keep for ever in this prosperous noon-day glare. Indeed, it is becoming necessary to exert considerable imaginative effort even to envisage the free-functioning, disinterested intelligence or the curious and non-partisan sensibility, responsive alike to grief and joy.

Walking through any of the chief streets of New York City one of these brilliant October days—by far the most glorious month in New York's calendar, when the very air is electric with energy and life—one finds it hard to think of a man deliberately cutting himself from all this effulgence of life, yet the afternoon newspapers tell of MacSwiney's death in headline after headline on the sun-flecked stands. How can one deliberately die when there are these blue waters of the Hudson, these eager, bright, girlish forms, the towering strength of these buildings still to be seen and

responded to? It is like sending a funeral cortège through a carnival street, gay with flags and bunting. What inner light serene can have the power to make all these physical beauties black and miasmatic beside a more enduring radiance? These are disturbing questions for Americans. We shrug our shoulders and walk briskly up the Avenue. *Our* life is not like that; we have so many things to live for, so many fine things.

It is this mood we seek to perpetuate in our literature and our art, although of course it is but one mood out of the many that life gives us, and perhaps the one not most permanent. No matter; our editors, our playwrights, our artists, our philosophers and sociologists must keep it going, must make it eternal. It is the mood of progress, of idealism, of conviction that things matter; the mood of zealous success. It is the American intellectual compulsion, strong and unquestioned. Our young men from college come into the world with an optimistic assumption so firmly entrenched that even senseless war, pestilence, or famine could hardly withstand it. It is a kind of by-product of the materialistically triumphant machine-age, buttressed by a falsely Darwinian theory of the inevitability of progress, flattered by the philosophers, secured by the *naïveté* of a youthful people still certain, not only that human happiness is attainable, but actually existent. That is why the Oriental, with his implacable Eastern tolerance, seems to have a curiously amused expression in his eyes when he talks to us—a bit as if he were talking with impetuous children, who were yet to learn the vanity of all things. And he smiles even broadly when he reflects that Christianity, in essence an Eastern, un-worldly religion, is officially our faith.

Intellectually speaking, of course, there are no *a priori* reasons to justify optimistic conclusions about the world we live in—or pessimistic either, for that matter. It is a question of the evidence. But although the one sure fact in life is death and dissolution, the bias of our thought is always conditioned by the will-to-live. We shrink back in fright from too ruthless a view of our own frail mortality; we neglect when we do not despise the man who would constantly recall it to us; we cling with pathetic eagerness to mystical nostrums and superstitions that assure us of our eternal continuance. We dare not face the prospect of annihilation.

This boundless faith, this complacency about what life has to offer us, naturally comports very well with the physical opportunities of our existence. It reinforces, as it were, our national prosperity. It makes for clean cities, cheerful countenances, health. Our very funerals are pageants, for we will not let ourselves know the meaning of grief. We will not believe that sorrow and suffering may come through any other agency than our own remedial weaknesses; there is nothing in the nature of the world itself that makes them inevitable.

But art and literature can not flourish in such an atmosphere. They are strange flowers that can not blossom in too rich a soil, nor can they flourish when the soil is too poor. Our American soil is far too rich; it can produce only lush, quick-growing, quick-dying vegetation. Compare, for instance, the very best of our serious novels with, say, Dostoevsky's "Possessed," or "Crime and Punishment" (books, by the way, which the younger generation of American writers seems just to be discovering.) It is as if we had been living only half a life; we are suddenly taken *au-dessous de la mêlée*, as it were, to the rich, dim, uncertain, fantastic world—but none the less real—underlying that

of the ordinary, thin crust of everyday consciousness. It is a world where the values we most cling to in public become utterly meaningless; where pain has an introspective value; sorrow, a perceptive illumination of experience which make their cost disproportionate to their intrinsic worth.

But our own literature and art have not yet ceased to be in the battle; they have not yet learned how to get below the surface of things. Nor will they until our optimistic compulsion has been destroyed, until in the world of the spirit and of the mind we find that there is one moral obligation and only one: to tell the truth as we honestly see and feel it. Then only will our intellectual life be truly free.

A WEDGE IN THE SOLID SOUTH.

PEOPLE say that round about Ginger Cake Mountain in western North Carolina is really the most beautiful country in the world—but nowadays scenery is not the chief distinction of Ginger Cake Settlement; it boasts—discreetly—of being one of the greatest moonshine districts in the State.

Of the "speakin'" I learned through our neighbour when I went to get the milk. "I'm a-goin' over to the church to-night," he said, "to hear the Republican can'idates. The Democrats spoke yistiddy."

I asked if he had heard the Democrats.

"No, I already know the Democrat side. I jis' want to hear the Republicans."

At supper that evening we decided that we would take in the "speakin'." It was the first opportunity I have had to attend such a meeting in my new capacity as a voter. The meeting was to be in Jonas Ridge Church, three miles away. It smacked of adventure, starting off at dark, the wind roaring through the trees like a sea in the air. The first cold snap and autumn "blow" had come together. Before we reached Jonas Ridge we were fairly feeling our way along the mountain-road through the deep woods, plopping now and then into mud-holes, with the helpless feeling one has in bad dreams.

In the little church, dimly lighted by smoky lamps and more dimly heated by a sulky wood-stove, a small crowd of mountaineers had gathered. A glance around discovered one scared-looking member of my own sex, a bride, I took her to be, and guessed that her husband had "fetched her along" because she had been afraid to stay at home alone.

One of the can'idates—for the legislature, I learned later—was tending the fire. All through the evening this was his task. As we entered the church he expressed the deepest solicitude for our comfort, urging us to come nearer the stove, assuring us that he knew we must be freezing, and other kindly attentions. Presently he took his overcoat and stuffed up one of the holes in a window where there had once been a pane of glass. At this, some of the other can'idates, not to be outdone, stuffed their overcoats into other paneless openings, and pretty soon things were warm enough for the meeting to begin. The chairman, with a fascinating, friendly smile and jauntily waving a half-smoked cigar, opened the proceedings in a speech of an hour and a half's duration which, seeing that it was given in a church, might fittingly be described as ranging "from the rivers unto the ends of the earth." First there were the anecdotes—a huge cornucopia of chestnuts which he poured copiously upon us. Many of these we had known of old; some we had heard told so many times that it was amusing to hear them told again by somebody else; others we had heard so long ago that we had almost forgotten them; and some were such old friends that we were constrained to laugh at them for old times' sake. Following what might be called a general introduction, concerning religion, education, political science—"that is, politics, gentlemen, not dirty politics, but clean, high-toned, righteous politics, gentlemen!" came a history of "the two parties in the United States" right back to George Washington. I suppose at this stage some one in the audience must have shown sleepiness, for the chairman began to rattle his cornucopia again, and when the laughs were over, he took up another line, and proceeded to tell us the reason for having two political parties instead of one. It is quite simple, when there are two parties one can always "watch the other." If there is the least bit of rascality under one party the other can be voted in—"and that means clean government, gentlemen."

Then the orator took up "one or two national issues." It

turned out to be only one; but this one required such prolonged consideration that we were very glad that he forgot to mention the other.

The issue we were asked to consider was the League of Nations. The chairman made it abundantly clear to the gentlemen of Ginger Cake Mountain through many anecdotes, digressions and assertions that the difference between the two parties this year is their stand on the League. This League, he explained, is a scheme whereby the United States, if we sign up, will have to send "Our Boys" over to Europe to fight for the Turks, "the unspeakable Turk, he has been called, gentlemen," or for the "dirty Bulgarians." He besought us all to tell him if we wanted "Our Boys" to go over to die in Turkey or Bulgaria. He himself, it seems, has two boys, and he proceeded to describe with paternal eloquence their charms and their bravery; he said in so many years they would be of fighting age and though he would be glad to see them die fighting for Old Glory, he himself would rather die before he would have his boys go over to fight the unspeakable Turks for the sake of the dirty Bulgarians. After this burst of feeling all that followed seemed like an anti-climax. The chairman went on talking for a good while before relinquishing the floor to the candidates. Poor things, they had waited so long that there wasn't much time for their speeches. Anyway they seemed timid creatures compared with the very expansive chairman. The candidate who had been looking after the fire so assiduously all the evening, made the only speech that could honestly be called a speech. The chairman, it appeared, had stolen most of his thunder, but nothing daunted, he was not above using a good deal of it again. He characterized the League as "a plan for Europe to furnish all the advice and all the talk and all the hot-air and all the bossing, and for America to furnish all the guns and all the men and all the money and all the supplies to wage war any time Europe says so."

And like another Patrick Henry he said he would choose death rather than allegiance to a party which would sign such an infamous League.

From world affairs the candidate descended to a few "State issues," the first of which seemed to be that he himself is "of the agricultural classes" like his Ginger Cake friends. (Most Ginger Cakers are raising corn nowadays when good "likker" sells for twenty dollars per gallon.) "I was born between the plow-handles," he said, "and raised there, and I ought to be there now"—at which some on snickered, so he added, "in the mornin'."

Which reminded everybody that it was two and a half hours past Ginger Cake's normal bed-time. So the "speakin'" closed shortly, with a sort of benediction by the chairman.

When we got outside the wind had died down and the moon had risen but I was so sleepy that I walked into all the mud-puddles on the way home.

OLIVIA PRICE.

HEAD DOWN IN A BOOTLEG.

SENATOR SPENCER'S recent controversy with President Wilson and the latter's denial that he promised to furnish our soldiers and sailors to Rumania in case of need, recalls another and equally vigorous denial by the President in regard to an earlier and still unexplained incident in his conduct of foreign policy.

On 19 August, 1919, during his interview at the White House with the Foreign Relations Committee, Mr. Wilson, in answer to questions put by Senators Johnson and Borah, denied six separate times that he had any knowledge of the secret treaties of the Allies until they were called to his attention at the Peace Conference at Paris in January, 1919. The questions and answers at this White House interview were in part as follows:

SENATOR BORAH: When did the secret treaty between Great Britain, France and the other nations of Europe with reference to certain adjustments in Europe first come to your knowledge? Was that after you had reached Paris, also?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, sir. The whole series of understandings were disclosed to me for the first time then.

SENATOR BORAH: Then we had no knowledge of these secret treaties so far as our government was concerned until you reached Paris?

THE PRESIDENT: Not unless there was information at the State Department of which I knew nothing. . . .

SENATOR JOHNSON: These specific treaties, then, the Treaty of London, on the basis of which Italy entered the war; the agreement with Rumania in August, 1916; the various agreements in respect to Asia Minor, and the agreements consummated in the winter of 1917 between France and Russia relative to the frontiers of Germany, and particularly in relation to the Saar Valley and the left bank of the Rhine, of none of these did we have (and when I say 'we' I mean you, Mr. President) any knowledge prior to the Conference at Paris?

THE PRESIDENT: No, sir. I can confidently answer that question, no, in regard to myself. . . .

The Peace Conference began in Paris on 13 January, 1919—it is important to bear this date in mind. In the first week of January of the preceding year, 1918, copies of all the treaties named by Senator Johnson—the Pact of London, the agreement with Rumania, etc.—were smuggled into the United States and delivered to gentlemen residing in New York City. These gentlemen in turn brought them to my office, where, after careful consideration, we decided that they ought to be made public. This decision was based on our belief that Mr. Wilson already had the treaties in his possession, but, with his usual secretiveness, was concealing them from the public, from Congress in general and from the Foreign Relations Committee in particular. It seemed to us, of course, entirely beyond the range of reason that the President knew nothing of these treaties. For, in the first place, it was impossible to conceive of an American President reckless enough to steer his country into war before inquiring into the aims of his prospective allies. And, in the second place, Mr. Arthur Balfour, heading the British Mission, had come to Washington in April, 1917, three weeks after our declaration of war. We, therefore, felt it was fair to assume that at that time, if not before, Mr. Wilson had obtained copies of all contracts defining the territorial and financial terms whose fulfillment the Allies would insist on before peace was made.

Our principal object in publishing the secret treaties was not to smoke the President out or put him in a hole. It was to create, mainly through Congressional pressure, a situation whereby Mr. Wilson would be forced to demand that all secret treaties consummated before America's entry into the war should be abrogated, so that the Allies and the United States would enter the peace conference on equal terms, unbound and able to negotiate a democratic and lasting settlement. Needless to say, it was clear that, if the secret treaties stood until the peace conference began, the representatives of the Entente would not be free agents. They would sit at the peace-table as mere attorneys, pledged in advance to negotiate for their clients a cut and dried series of reprisals, indemnities and annexations as imperialistic and, perhaps, as fatal to future security as anything which the Hohenzollerns would be likely to ask if Germany won the war.

After prolonged discussion extending over three or four meetings—four, I think—an arrangement was made for the publication of the secret treaties in the *New York Evening Post* in full. As their text was very long, about twelve thousand words, they were printed in installments beginning in the issue of 25 January, 1918.

In view of the above circumstances, Mr. Wilson's replies to the Foreign Relations Committee are remarkable enough. But they are more remarkable still, when we consider that advance proofs of the *Evening Post's* reprints were released to important newspapers all over the country; and in addition, the treaties were put up in pamphlet-form and sold at ten cents a copy. Numbers of these pamphlets were mailed to Senators, including friends of the President on the Foreign Rela-

tions Committee, with the suggestion that they should be read into the *Congressional Record*.

Furthermore, the most important of all the secret treaties, the so-called Pact of London was publicly read in the Italian Chamber of Deputies by Deputy Beviene on 15 February, 1918, causing a tremendous sensation which was accentuated by the fact that when Signor Beviene came to the clause dealing with Italy's occupation of certain islands, and said "eight," a wag in the back of the Chamber exclaimed in a sepulchral voice, "Thou Shalt Not Steal," a pleasantry which, because of its apt characterization of the Pact, speedily made the rounds of Europe before echoing to our shores. All of which was duly commented on in the *New York Globe* of 18 February, 1918, under the heading "Italian Secret Treaty Read."

On 24 January, 1918, I had a meeting with President Wilson's friend and confidant, Colonel House, at his home in New York. The purpose of the meeting related to various matters, but during the conversation I happened to mention that the secret treaties were to be published in the newspapers next day. To my surprise, Colonel House said that he had never read or even seen the secret treaties and did not know their contents. I replied that, as they undoubtedly contained what would be the backbone of the final peace treaty, unless the President forced the Allies to abrogate them, they were documents of transcendent importance to this country. I, therefore, urged Colonel House to take the matter up with the President, pointing out that the secret treaties were no mere informal memoranda, but, in the case of the Pact of London at least, signed and sealed contracts for the division of the spoils of victory, which taken together, disposed of vast areas of Central Europe, the Balkans, Asia Minor, Mesopotamia, Africa and Asia proper and shifted millions of human beings from one nationality to another, at the same time redistributing many billions of dollars worth of property.

And yet we have it from Mr. Wilson in his replies to the members of the Foreign Relations Committee on 19 August, 1919, that Colonel House did not think it worth while to call his attention to the secret treaties! On the contrary, Colonel House seems to have quietly pigeon-holed them in his mind; and later, when the President went to Paris to secure a Wilson peace and a Wilson league of nations, the Colonel permitted his friend to arrive in virgin ignorance of the fact that Messrs. Lloyd George, Clemenceau and Orlando were already bound in writing to a settlement that would knock Mr. Wilson, his fourteen points, his treaty and his league higher than a kite.

Of course, there would be little point in all of this if its only result was to prove either that the President played the part of an ignoramus at Versailles, or that, later at the White House, he received the Senators not as a man whose lips were wet with water from the well of truth. Experience has already made us sufficiently aware of the dunderheadedness of Mr. Wilson's Administration; while his State Department and his Department of Justice furnish almost daily proof that the official word is loose as a hare's hide and light as ribbons in a wind. Nevertheless, the foregoing record of events has a bearing on current topics, especially on the question whether this country should join the League of Nations.

By beginning with the secret treaties, continuing on to the peace conference and ending with Mr. Wilson's return from Europe and his presentation of his treaty and covenant to Congress, we get a very fair line on what would happen if America entered the League.

1. The United States sent its delegates to Paris

where they met delegates from foreign nations—exactly as we would send delegates to Geneva to meet foreign delegates, if we were members of the League.

2. To represent us at Paris there were appointed men of supposed ability and reputed experience in foreign affairs—the same class of men that would be selected for service at Geneva.

3. Our delegates' avowed business at Paris was to work for a quite definite object, i. e., for a settlement that would protect our interests and promote lasting peace. With exactly the same purposes our delegates would go to Geneva.

4. But at Paris, the American representatives were confronted with men of infinitely stronger grasp of international affairs, men whose lives had been spent in diplomatic struggles and intrigues; experienced negotiators, compared with whom our representatives were at best but ill-equipped amateurs. At Paris, they proved no match for the foreign talent that opposed them, as in all probability they would find themselves outclassed at Geneva. For political life in the United States, separated as it is from the States of Europe, does not conduce, happily perhaps, to the production of Metternichs, Talleyrands, Bismarcks, Lloyd Georges and Clemenceaux. Such men are essentially foreign-made, developed by older civilizations in countries whose proximity to each other makes for constant clash. At Paris our delegates found that they were strangers, outsiders, who did not belong to the lodge, while those of the Entente were at home, equipped and united by a close community of interest and an understanding born of years of close association as friends and foes.

5. Moreover, the Allied Governments were knit together by another bond. One says one's prayers for a debtor; but a creditor is everybody's enemy. And all of the Entente Powers represented at Paris owed money to the United States, a condition that certainly would exist at Geneva, at least until the distant date when Europe pays its debts—or repudiates them.

6. At Paris, our delegation and its eminent chief were accordingly gulled, hoodwinked, outwitted, outvoted, made ridiculous and finally sent home defeated at every point. And worse than that, our delegates came back secretive, addled and on the defensive—especially our head delegate, who having signed a treaty which flatly negatived almost everything he had set out to obtain, thereafter devoted his whole energy to trying to persuade his countrymen that their cause had been won and not betrayed at Paris. And, as a finale to this lugubrious episode, we are now being asked in this Presidential election of 1920 to hallow and make lasting all Mr. Wilson's failures, by entering a league, in which our unfortunate country would be—as poor Thomas Woodrow was at Paris—head down in a bootleg.

In any event, there is something almost infantile in the conception of stopping war by a league of nations. War is not caused by the hostility of peoples. Interests, not men make wars. The rival interests of privileged classes in their race for opportunities of exploitation are the root of all wars. It was the thirty-year struggle between such rival interests in Germany and England that had its climax in 1914. The rivalries of these interests are irreducible except by the sword. As long as the interests remain, the rivalries will persist, unflinchingly. They can not be talked away by diplomats and idealists. Moreover, for these interests war is, after all, the cheapest mode of settlement. In England and France and the United States, it is not apparent that war has flattened the pocket or the power of privilege.

In any league of nations that is possible under present conditions, it goes without saying that the delegates

of the Powers would inevitably be, as they were at Paris, the attorneys, not of the people, but of the privileged interests that hold war sacred—sacred because necessary to the protection and extension of commercial gains.

The best way, the only way in fact, that the people of any country can secure themselves against a repetition of the late war's inconveniences, is to break the power of the privileged classes in their own country. When America really is a democracy, that is to say governed by its men and women and not by a network of economic forces, the danger of being pushed into another "war for democracy" will diminish, if not altogether disappear. Until then our children will sleep on the brink of the abyss.

AMOS PINCHOT.

THE DIVINE RIGHT OF LINEAGE.

TRULY, the progress of knowledge is slow and painful. For at least a score of years, anthropologists have been pointing out that race has often little to do with either language or nationality. Indeed, during the great war some of them made heroic efforts to put the essential information before the public; but, as Schiller might say, against folk-science even the anthropologist battles in vain.

Yet the relevant facts are by no means difficult to get at. Go to any large gathering of Germans and scrutinize the crowd. Then compare them with the people you saw at the French theatre two or three winters ago. The chances are that you can match rather more than half the individuals of either group in the other; on the score of mere looks the greatest specialist in the world could never tell which were Germans and which were French. On the other hand, even a careless observer would note that neither the French audience nor the German *Verein* represents a homogeneous group. If they are truly representative gatherings, a number of conspicuously tall men will be found to stand out sharply in either case from a larger body of moderately-sized ones. There will be a few markedly fair individuals amidst a number of distinctly darker type. Again, there will be decided differences in the shape of the heads: in both assemblies there will be men, the width of whose heads is rather more than eight-tenths of the length, while in others the relative width descends towards three-fourths or even falls below that ratio.

Having regard then to the way in which these three traits are associated, we might classify each of our artificial national groups into natural biological ones. From this point of view we should then be able to set off in both of them a subdivision of tall, fair and rather long-headed men, leaving another made up of stocky, darker-haired and markedly broad-headed individuals. From the French audience we might further segregate some men of pronouncedly swarthy complexion, shorter than the broad-skulled group, rather longer-headed even than the tall group. To this last subdivision there would be no equivalent among the Germans. Ignoring it, however, for the present, we may say that a scientist classifying mankind as to physical appearance alone would not hesitate to combine certain Frenchmen and Germans into one division and certain others into a second division altogether irrespective of the differences in speech and political affiliation. To use the accepted nomenclature, he would recognize not a French and a German race, but a tall Nordic or Teutonic and a medium-sized Alpine race, each including at the same time natives of both countries.

But in making this classification the investigator is creating two ideal types, to which only a minority of individuals conform at all closely. There are many men who are both tall and dark, for example; just as there are many short blonds. Nature, in other words, has not neatly segregated all existing individuals into the two types, Nordic and Alpine. In the total population individuals of intermediate character bulk far more prominently than "pure" representatives of the Nordic and the Alpine complex.

These two races, then, are not so much realities coming under our direct observation as they are concepts by means of which the anthropologist can more or less satisfactorily describe much of the extant population of Europe. By assuming that at one time there existed a distinct Teutonic and a distinct Alpine stock, which mixed in varying degree in different parts of Europe, we are able to give a fairly consistent account of the regional differences of the European type. Tall, fair and long-skulled individuals occur most abundantly in Scandinavia and the British Isles, the percentage attaining a maximum in Sweden, where over ten per cent of the total population still conforms to the Nordic type. Southwards its representatives decrease in relative numbers, finally dwindling down to an inconsiderable fraction of the whole people. Thus, comparing the Swedes with the peasants of central France, we find that while a man of five feet, seven inches, ranks as tall among the latter, the net height of nearly sixty per cent of all Swedes is in excess of that height; while the fair hair and long heads prevailing among the Scandinavians are correspondingly rare in the French group.

Of this dwindling of Nordic traits as one departs from the Scandinavian centre, Germany furnishes a striking example. The physical differences noted in our German *Verein* are not by any means freakish, but follow a fairly definite geographical law. It is the Mecklenburger and his immediate neighbours who are almost indistinguishable from the Scandinavian; it is the native of the Black Forest who resembles the peasant of central France. This regional difference persists in spite of all the modern conditions so favourable to migration and interbreeding. Applying the useful symbols of an Alpine and a Nordic race, we can readily interpret the observed phenomena. If, for example, the Mecklenburger proves to be a little shorter and broader-skulled than the Swede, we can explain his departure from the Teutonic norm by a slight infusion of Alpine blood. If the Tyrolese towers above his broad-headed neighbours, a Nordic strain will account for the anomaly.

A corresponding local analysis can be made of the French, and the final result of both studies would lend greater precision to our initial comparison of the two national groups. It is not merely certain Frenchmen and certain Germans, but the French of Normandy and the Germans of Mecklenburg that belong together, while the Breton is similarly united with the Badenser rather than with his Norman compatriot. The Teutonic category includes the French-speaking Norman and quite as definitely excludes the German-speaking inhabitant of the Black Forest.

So far, all is smooth sailing. But it is otherwise when we turn from the study of bodily traits to a comparison of races in the matter of psychology. There is a widespread belief that with racial differences as to outward appearance there are associated profound differences, equally hereditary, in intellectual capacity and ethical outlook. Thus, during the war, some Allied propagandists, ignoring the simple fact that the German people did not represent a racial

unit, attempted to prove that the atrocities of the German soldiers were the necessary result of their organic constitution; that they were as ferocious during the war as they had been in the days of the Cæsars and as they are bound to be to the end of time. Others—and there were scientists among them—showed to their own satisfaction that the Germans were by nature altogether debarred from creative effort. These views, resting, of course, on sheer ignorance, can be briefly dismissed; for the Germans are not a race, and therefore no hereditary traits whatsoever can be ascribed to them as a group. If such qualities as brutality and imitativeness are ascribed to the Nordic racial strain, then they must be at least equally characteristic of the Nordics of the United Kingdom and Scandinavia. If, on the other hand, all their deficiency is due to the Alpine alloy, then the very same shortcomings must be expected of the natives of Central France. In a word, the question whether Germans are innately inferior to English or French is scientifically meaningless; there can be question only of the comparative merits of the Nordic and the Alpine race.

As a matter of fact, some of our recent controversialists possessed a sufficient smattering of anthropological knowledge to formulate the problem in these terms. It is interesting to note that the most prominent, certainly the most vociferous, combatants on both sides were agreed in one point—the vast superiority of the Nordic. When German chauvinists proclaimed the glories of their civilization as a distinctively Nordic product, their English-speaking opponents did not challenge the basic assumption of Nordic supremacy, but contented themselves with showing, correctly enough, that the Nordic airs put on by the Germans were absurd since so large a proportion of Germans are of Alpine blood. This is, of course, a neat dialectic thrust, but it fails to touch the core of the problem.

What, then, is the evidence for the greater worth of the Nordic? This question can be answered briefly but fairly, that it is precisely *nil*. No more exhilarating source of innocent merriment exists than the literature of the school headed by Count Gobineau and Mr. Houston Stewart Chamberlain. All the great men of European history are passed in review by these gentlemen and, with complete assurance, are solemnly pronounced to be one and all of Nordic stock; at least, by a miraculous intuition all their desirable traits are assigned to Nordic heritage. Do actual measurements make Bismarck a broad-head? If they do, then of course the measurements must be wrong: "our great Bismarck" must assuredly have had a long head. Richard Wagner's diminutive frame is obviously the dire result of inter-breeding with Alpines; his genius must be an unadulterated creation of Nordic germ-plasm.

Quite apart from such palpable absurdities, this Gobineau-Chamberlain theory is objectionable from every possible angle. In the first place, while modern science does not dogmatically proclaim the equality of all races, the differences between any two of them are certainly far less than is popularly assumed. Indeed, it can be stated quite definitely that no satisfactory proof has yet been furnished that the European is by native endowment superior to the Malay or the Negro. Until such proof is offered, the assumption of a vast hereditary difference between Nordic and Alpine European has not the slightest plausibility. Secondly, it would be interesting to know on what grounds any specific psychological traits are ascribed to the Nordic race. Intellectual and spiritual capaci-

ties are not so readily measured as are the colour of hair or skin; nor is it easy in appraising them to disengage the acquired from the natural factors.

But difficult as the problem is, it becomes insoluble when we recall that nowhere nowadays, certainly nowhere in Germany, do we find a large group from which we can be certain that Alpine influences are wholly excluded. As the eugenicist Schallmayer remarks, there is probably in the whole of Germany not a single individual of purely Nordic descent. In other words, we can not isolate a pure Nordic group from a pure Alpine group and compare their respective mental characteristics. For a rough classification, these ideal concepts do very well, but they are quite inadequate for so delicate a psychological inquiry. Assuming, then, for the sake of argument, that the Nordic stock originally possessed a distinctive psyche, how are we to ascertain its characteristics to-day? We can determine only what mental traits are combined with the relatively purest physical complex that gave rise to the concept of the Nordic type. But, apart from the technical difficulties of establishing the higher qualities of imagination, reasoning power and spiritual faculties, there is nothing in the law of heredity to prevent a Nordic physique from being again and again associated with an Alpine mentality, and vice versa. Nordic mentality, an improbable a priori notion, thus passes into the realm of the unknowable. The Nordic concept is an abstraction based on physical data, and to transfer it to the psychological sphere can lead only to disastrous results.

There would be a semblance of plausibility in the contentions of the Chamberlainists, if populations preponderantly Teutonic exhibited any marked superiority over Alpine groups living under generally similar social conditions. But this test is a lamentable failure. It is a notorious fact that the South Germans contributed rather more than their proportional share to the roster of great Germans. An excellent case in point is provided by the history of the Walloons in Sweden. These people are descendants of Belgian blacksmiths who settled in Sweden in the seventeenth century; for a long period intermarried exclusively among themselves, and only in recent years have come to mingle in some measure with the Swedes. With their dark skin and hair these immigrants present a marked contrast to their fair-haired hosts. Yet this handful of Alpine intruders hold their own among the purest Nordic population of the world. Professor Retzius, who can not be accused of an anti-Nordic bias, not only gives these Walloons an excellent civic character but points out that a number of them have risen to eminence in science and in public life.

But of course reasoned argument is of no avail against the race-enthusiast, because at bottom nothing interests him less than the dispassionate quest of truth. As some of his guild candidly avow, the cult of their race is not for them a matter to be rationally discussed, it is a full-fledged faith embodying their dearest ideal values. They thus present to the critical anthropologist the impregnable front of religious fanatics for whom the worship of the Nordic fills the emotional void left by the decay of older creeds. Viewing the situation from this angle, the scientist might well turn his back upon it, for it is by no means his function to prove to any group of devotees that their values are not values—to themselves. "Religious opinions," says Ernst Mach, the wisest spokesman of modern science, "remain each man's most individual private affair so long as he does not obtrude them on others and transfer them to matters belonging before a different forum."

So long as he does not obtrude them on others, there's the rub: it is the Teutonomanic's propagandist activity that rouses scientific hostility. For unlike Yum-Yum he is not content to thrill with rapture at the contemplation of his own transcendent loveliness. His is a faith less tolerant than that of Islam, for its aim is not the conversion but the damnation of the infidel; salvation is only by predestination, by the divine right of Nordic lineage. It is because the follower of Gobineau, like all bigots, contends that *his* values represent absolute values to be recognized alike by Nordic and non-Nordic, because by a quasi-scientific theodicy he tries to sublimate his individual belief into an objective standard that the scientist is compelled to take up arms against him. The scientist will do so without venom against the honest enthusiasts among his opponents but also without fear of wounding their sensibilities, for the matter is too important to permit an excess of delicacy. The scientist will not dogmatize as to racial equality when not even the foundation has been laid for an accurate determination of the higher racial capacities. He will simply point out again and again, calmly and authoritatively, that in the light of present knowledge nothing warrants the idolatry of whatever bit of reality may lurk behind that concept of a "Nordic race" which for purposes of classifying human groups by their physical traits is of some use and convenience to anthropological science.

ROBERT H. LOWIE.

JOHN REED.

JOHN REED, American poet, died, a communist, in Moscow, the capitol of the future State, of the disease of the revolutionary present: typhus; he was bitten by a sick louse, a doomed parasite.

Jack could have made a song of that, a laughing song, in the days when he sang and laughed. He was a joyous spirit then; I tried to keep him glad. His father asked me to. Jack's father was my friend, and a brilliant man he was; a wit. He was the leading spirit of the leading club of Portland, Oregon; and he played himself, as he wished his boy to play, till he was bitten, as the boy was, by those same deadly, dying things.

Francis J. Heney came to Oregon, prosecuting timber-frauds, seeking with William J. Burns for the proofs of the process by which our forests fell into private hands. The evidence reached up among the commanding men of Oregon, and they controlled, among other things, the machinery of the law. Their U. S. Marshal picked the juries. Heney asked Reed—Jack's father—to be U. S. Marshal and so see that the panels were free and fair. Reed laughed. He guessed what it meant to him, but he took the job; and he did the job. There were convictions and there were hates. Reed's club hated Reed, who faced the hate and bit it with his wit. He had a tongue, as Jack had. It is a story of breed I'm telling.

One day, several years after the timber-fraud scandal, ex-U. S. Marshal Reed invited me to his club. He led me into the main dining-room up to the centre table where "the crowd" lunched. It was the noon-hour; most of the crowd were there.

"There they are," said Reed to me, but for them to hear. "That's the crowd that got the timber and tried to get me. And there, at the head of the table, that vacant chair, that's my place. That's where I sat. That's where I stood them off, for fun for years, and then for months in deadly earnest; but gaily, always gaily. I haven't sat in that place since the day I rose and left it, saying I'd never come back to it and saying that I would like to see which one of them would have the nerve to think that he could take and hold and fill my place. I have heard, and I am glad to see, that it is vacant yet, my vacant chair."

That was Jack Reed's father: tall, handsome, audacious and a wit; a gay and, later, a bitten, bitter wit. He told me about his boy at Harvard and he asked me "to look out for Jack" when he came out of college into life in New York.

"He is a gay spirit," the father said, "a joyous thing. Keep him so. He is a poet, I think; keep him singing. Let him see everything, but don't—don't let him get like me."

I couldn't. I tried, and not for his father's sake only.

When John Reed came, big and growing, handsome outside and beautiful inside, when that boy came down from Cambridge to New York, it seemed to me that I had never seen anything so near to pure joy. No ray of sunshine, no drop of foam, no young animal, bird or fish, and no star, was as happy as that boy was. If only we could keep him so, we might have a poet at last who would see and sing nothing but joy. Convictions were what I was afraid of. I tried to steer him away from convictions, that he might play; that he might play with life; and see it all, love it all, live it all; tell it all; that he might be it all; but all, not any one thing. And why not? A poet is more revolutionary than any radical. Great days they were, or rather nights, when the boy would bang home late and wake me up to tell me what he had been and seen that day; the most wonderful thing in the world. Yes. Each night he had been and seen the most wonderful thing in the world.

He wrote some of those things. He became all of those things. He fell head over heels in love with every single one of those most wonderful things: with his job; with his friends; with labour; with girls; with strikes; with the I. W. W.; with socialism; with the anarchists; with the bums in the Bowery; with the theatre; with God and Man and Being. I pulled him out of each such love-affair anxiously at first, but so easily and so often that I soon felt he was safe. I thought I could trust the next most wonderful thing to save him from the last most wonderful thing, so I went off on a long journey, to Mexico. So did Jack, but Jack went, as a poet, to Villa, the bandit, while I went, as U. S. Marshal Reed would have gone, to Carranza's side.

I don't know just what it was that finally caught and took the joy out of this poet and turned him into a poem. He loved a girl, one girl, but Louise is a poet, too, and a vagabond, or she was when she left here in boy's clothes last summer to follow Jack to Russia. And he loved the I. W. W. faithfully and the Red Left of the Socialist party, and, like his father, he hated hate and—all that. I really think it was in the breed. Anyhow, he got a conviction and so, the revolutionary spirit got him. He became a fighter; out for a cause; a revolutionist at home here, and in Russia a communist. He didn't smile any more.

A friend of his and of mine, who travelled, and worked with Jack in Russia last summer said that Jack was "like the other communists in there": he was hard, intolerant, ruthless, clinched for the fight. I could see that Jack had hurt our friend who, having said this, brooded a moment. But then said his friend:

"I wish I could be a communist."

You see, in Moscow, in Soviet Russia, where there are lice and hunger and discipline and death; where it is hell now; they see—even a non-communist can see something to live or to die for. They can see that life isn't always going to be as it is now. The future is coming; it is in sight; it is coming, really and truly coming, and soon. And it is good. They can see this with their naked eyes, common men can; I did, for example. So, to a poet, to a spirit like Jack Reed, the communist, death in Moscow must have been a vision of the resurrection and the life of Man.

LINCOLN STEFFENS.

POETRY.

WILLOW POLLEN.

Fleur de Lys on Lake Champlain.

The rain upon my roof is the rain of apple blossoms,
At my feet the water willows stand knee-deep in rushes;
A swaying mirror for the sun the lake swings and tips,
Spilling broken drowsy shadows and silver leaves.
In the willow pollen the bees hum;
In the apple bloom the bees hum;
Fluttering up like a begging hand
The ash tree twirls its mystic seven-fold leaf,
The thrush its song.

O beautiful world, what are you?
And who made you?
Are you no more than a fragrant dream,
A jewelled crust of loam for sun to shine upon,
A swaying mirror of water,
Willow pollen,
A twirling song,
A crumbling leaf?

JEANNETTE MARKS.

MISCELLANY.

MR. JAMES HUNEKER little knows what a flood of memories of old New York his volume "Steeplejack" has let loose, in my mind; nor does he know, and I do not either, where they will run to. He starts me thinking first of all about those old haunts that lay between Eighth Street and Madison Square. Once again I am popping in and out of restaurants and hotels where so many of the old friends he mentions were to be seen; once again I go marching up the stairs of the *Musical Courier* office in Union Square hoping to find there James Hunecker himself. What days those were! I can still see Jim Hill sauntering between the old Coleman House and the Union Square Theatre, his splendid Dundrearys floating in the breeze. And Billy Crane, always alert, happy and dapper, saluting all and sundry as he passed on his way to the Star Theatre where "The Senator" was having a wonderful run. What stories those stones at the corner of Fourteenth Street could tell. It was there Henry Irving's wonderful hat was carried off by a sudden gust of wind into the Square. For a moment the discomfited tragedian looked like Lear with his white hair,

Which the impetuous blasts, with eyeless rage,
Catch in their fury, and make nothing of.

But Sir Henry was never the man to run after his hat. He stood his ground firmly, and presently a hack-driver brought it back to him.

I AM often puzzled when I think what the unhappy historian will say ten or fifteen years hence when he applies himself to the task of telling the next generation something about New York of the 'eighties. There won't be a vestige of it left standing. The house-breakers are always at work. Where alas! is old Tony Pastor's, the Academy of Music, and old Tammany Hall? Tony Pastor was a significant figure in the life of old New York, and so was Ned Gilmore. And what a wonderful place in those spacious days was Lüchow's. Think of the folk who came to eat at his tables! And Lüchow himself. Why, he ought to be as famous to his generation as, say, Louis Eustace Ude was to his. How blurred our memories are becoming in these modern times.

AM I all wrong about Union Square in the old days? Is it merely the fantasy of one who years ago came to the city filled with the spirit of romance and merely glorified the tawdry events of a tawdry period. Surely that is not the case. Union Square was a centre—we have no such centres now in our modern city. There was the old Café Hungaria. One never-to-be-forgotten Sunday night, in the rooms at the top of the building, three of the world's greatest pianists took turns at the Steinway. On another occasion, I remember in the Café downstairs a great company with Catenhausen and Lilli Lehmann feasted and talked of composers and singers who are seldom mentioned nowadays. Then there was Brubacher's where the Rhine wine was of the best; a place where every one talked of music, music, music and nothing but music. In those far-off days, dear old Ernest Catenhausen had an apartment on Irving Place. I remember one Sunday afternoon seeing Lilli Lehmann turn majestically out into Gramercy Park just as the old gentleman was leaving the stoop. What a greeting passed between them—the old style greeting.

BUT everything is scattered now. The times are out of joint. There are no coteries, no rendezvous. We are all merely acquaintances of one another. Where is that old cameraderie, that old intimacy which we used to enjoy so freely and so happily. That room upstairs at Fleischmann's was once the most famous rendezvous in the world. We have nothing like it in New York or in any of our cities to-day. I lived in Ninth Street in those days, and Martin's restaurant in University Place was at its hey-day. Mary Siddons and Harry Waller and I, when we were in funds, would go there to lunch or dine

and enjoy as good cooking as even Paris could provide. Martin's was a great place at the beginning of the opera season, Victor Maurel and Jean and Edouard de Reszke (in their early days) were often there. What bustle and excitement there was when the singers arrived from Europe. One Sunday night there was a party of about a dozen lions dining there—the de Reszkes, Seidl, Rosenthal, Henry Irving, Mary Siddons and Dvorak, all as happy as boys and girls at a clam-bake. Thank God, the old building still stands—but not for long I fear.

WHAT has come over us in this city during these thirty years? We all seem to be under such restraint, nowadays. We all seem to be hedged in, afraid to let ourselves go. Is it because we have so few opportunities for meeting and understanding one another? Of course, it is true that as one grows older one is inclined to glorify "the good old days," and overlook what is best in the present. But I would like to ask my older readers whether they feel that there is really the same frankness and friendship in the life of to-day? Enthusiasm seems to have cooled. Perhaps, the upheaval caused by the war and its outcome has done much to sour our dispositions and to make us all cynical. Whatever it may be, something has been withdrawn from life that was very delightful while it lasted.

I TAKE the following paragraphs from an interesting letter that has just reached me from a good friend who is sojourning in Europe these days: "... Scraps of paper! Not a soul in Paris ever sees a coin of greater value than twenty-five centimes, and as often as not, one receives change for less than fifty centimes in postage stamps. The one-franc and fifty-centimes 'shinplasters' are small and ugly and are printed on very poor quality paper. They pass from hand to hand until they become so filthy that one longs to spend money in order not to have to carry it. Prices in France have shot up in the same ratio as the money-value has depreciated. There is everywhere a curious disrespect for money, in spite of a universal greediness. This apparent contradiction arises out of the general demoralization that seems to have seized the city, though outwardly Paris is gay and prosperous. The taxi-cabs threaten to fall to pieces; they are in such need of repair; and, moreover, they are unspeakably dirty. The chauffeurs are impertinently independent; they spurn moderate tips and often refuse to take passengers unless they are going for short distances or in the direction toward which the cab happens to be headed. As for the Paris telephone-service it is impossible; there is surely no modern city in which this service is so meagre and so bad.

"LONDON," continues my correspondent, "in spite of increasing unemployment, labour-unrest, high taxation, mounting cost of living and threatening financial panic—offers strong and favourable contrasts to Paris. The telephone is in universal use and the service is prompt, the taxicabs are spick and span and the drivers thank you for whatever you may give them. There is no paper-money smaller than a ten-shilling note and the abundance of silver coin serves to prevent paper from being forced on one. The housing shortage in London is acute—and in the provincial towns no less—and living costs are constantly rising, yet one gets less of the feeling of abnormal conditions than in Paris. The Londoners are feverishly (feverishly for Englishmen!) trying to make everything seem as if nothing unusual had happened between August, 1914, and November, 1918, and, in general, they are acting the part quite well. If a London tradesman makes a promise he keeps it. If a Paris tradesman makes a promise he doesn't even trouble to excuse his breach. This is not to say that business is conducted perfectly in England and always badly in France, but rather that integrity seems to be less shaken in England and that France appears to be in the grip of a demoralization the evidences of which are to be found on every hand."

JOURNEYMAN.

THE THEATRE.

IN QUEST OF A NATIVE DRAMA.

MANY and tortuous paths are likely to be explored in the quest for a native American drama. Most of the conceivable thoroughfares to this goal of high adventure are uncertain and uncharted until some one ventures to seek them out and to find whether they lead to the desired destination or run off into blind alleys. Sometimes they may be traversed with intention aforethought; sometimes by the merest chance with other aims uppermost in the minds of the wayfarers. Whether it be by deliberate or unconscious motive, the Theatre Guild has set its steps down one of these corridors with the first presentation in English of David Pinski's satiric comedy "The Treasure," the opening play of its third season.

The significance of the production of "The Treasure" as a contribution to the quest for a native drama may not at first be obvious. Neither its sources nor its subject matter nor all of the gifts which enter into its interpretation are of our soil. And yet those individuals who are responsible for all these elements are present and permanent participants in our life and practitioners in our theatre, bringing to the cultivation of its thinly yielding acres the spiritual tools with which to stir and stimulate its natural but dormant fecundity. Pending the growth of that native drama and the discovery of genuinely American imagination to tend and harvest it, we should be not only ungracious but shortsighted if we refused to accept the assistance brought to us from overseas by those who have chosen to cast their lot with us. Perhaps, through them and through the dreams and the skill with which they have come endowed, we shall discover one of the paths to a native drama. Not only may they serve as urge to our own artists, but they themselves may dream new dreams in a new land if we will listen with respect to their memories of dreams of the past.

It is a tale of his native Russia that Pinski has told in "The Treasure," a tale of the pale within which the Jewish race was mewed up under the Tsars and wherein most of the racial customs were preserved side by side with distinctly Russian manners and habits. Pinski wrote it after he came to this country, and, therefore, it has connotations by turn Jewish, Russian and American. It is most obviously Jewish, because it deals with Jews as characters; it holds up to criticism traits which may, perhaps, be more particularly Jewish although they have universal truth and significance; and finally, it was written in the Yiddish language, from which it emerged into German at the producing hands of Max Reinhardt in Berlin in 1910 and into English translation through Ludwig Lewisohn from the press of B. W. Huebsch in 1915.

In its original form, "The Treasure" has had to confront the scrutiny of a race which is as exacting of its serious work as it is tolerant of its ephemeral output. The Jews are realists above all, despite the frequent nobility of their imagination, and they bear criticism, especially self-criticism, with better grace than almost any other people. With this self-exacting realism, therefore, Pinski has told the story of a gravedigger's half-wit son who digs up a few pieces of gold and forgets where he found it; of the daughter who spends for clothes with a free hand to win a husband, but who puts away in the bank, unbeknown to the rest, a sufficient sum for modest dowry in case a substantial treasure is not discovered; of father and mother who take a kind of secret pride in the daugh-

ter's daring, despite the embarrassment into which she has plunged them; and of a whole community making night grotesque with their restless and covetous vigil among the gravestones. It is not a flattering picture of his people that Pinski has painted; and yet, without sentimentalizing it, he has managed to infuse into it something of the finer idealism which lies behind the lure of money: the reaching out to a vista of freedom, both physical and spiritual, which is denied when physical want is too depressing.

The Russian connotations of "The Treasure" are equally decisive and illuminating. Only the most prejudiced guardians of Slavic purism will deny it consideration and comparison with the rest of the output of the modern Russian dramatic movement. Its inspiration, structural as well as spiritual, is from Gorky and Andreyev. There is the same easy naturalism of dramatic style, the same relentless inquisitiveness into the by-paths of human nature, the same searching for symbols, for meanings, in life. And yet there is a difference. And the difference, somehow, great as his literary forbears are, stands to the advantage of Pinski. He has managed, in "The Treasure," to reach a conclusion that is logical and inevitable and yet lacking the despair and hopelessness which closes round so many plays of the Russian canon. He questions life as sternly as they, and yet he finds an affirmative answer. His human comedy is bitter, as almost any honest analysis of life is bound to be; but, knowing all, it is still yea-saying.

Partly from the Jewish and Russian connotations and partly from the purely adventitious circumstances in the situation, the American connotations may be deduced. "The Treasure" affords us a brave example of the self-criticism which we are too prone to shun. It is more comfortable than "The Life of Man" or "The Lower Depths" to our own determined if unrealistic yea-saying. We like to leave the theatre with a belief in life, even if we have been willing to look rather frankly into some of its deeper and less admirable recesses: a motive which has been mis-translated into the supposed demand for the happy ending. And Pinski, by the more-or-less chance which carries an immigrant from one country to another, has come to us to ply these gifts and perhaps to show us the way to use them ourselves.

"The Treasure," too, serves to bring to the English-speaking stage and, therefore, to a wider public the talents of one of the most promising of the younger generation of players in New York's Yiddish theatres, Celia Adler. Although born and educated in America, Miss Adler has had heretofore only an alien connexion with the land of her birth. Through those associations, however, she has had an opportunity to learn the cultural background of a large portion of our transplanted citizenship; and the new field on which she is entering should give her occasion for service to the cause of American drama similar to that of Pinski. Emanuel Reicher, also, has an opening, through this same venture of the Theatre Guild, for a double glance backward toward his early days in Galicia, just across the border from the Russian Jewish pale, and forward to his present and continuing labours as producer in the theatre in America.

The production of "The Treasure" is not the goal of this thoroughfare toward native drama, but merely an inn by the roadside. Contrasted with some of the more exotic plays in the Theatre Guild's brief history, it is a decided step in advance toward a genuinely American theatre. Jacob Ben Ami is not far away now on the same road with the work of Peretz Hirshbein, another and a different Pinski, to follow

his initial productions of "Samson and Delilah" and Andreyev's "He Who Receives Slaps in the Face." Is it too much to hope that our Spanish and Italian citizenship may add their contributions to those of our Russians for a further exploration of this highway?

OLIVER M. SAYLER.

WANTED—A PLAY FOR MISS ANGLIN.

IN one of the best and wisest books ever written about the theatre, Colley Cibber's "Apology," the author somewhere says, "The life of beauty is not long enough to make an actress." Over and over those words come back to a critic, and over and over, one may suppose, they must come back to many an actress, sometimes with mournful suggestions. Never were truer words spoken of the stage. Talma, the great French tragedian, once said that it took at least twenty years to make a finished player. At any rate, there are always a score of young, pretty, popular, and generally promising actresses (seldom, in this country, so many young men), to every one actress of matured power and commanding position. Do the young and pretty actresses fail to fulfil their promise as they grow older? Do they marry and leave the stage? Or does the public refuse to take an interest in them after they have passed the flush of youth? Something of all three, no doubt. Youth and prettiness in a woman cover, like charity, a multitude of sins, and the public very often prefers youth and prettiness, no matter how inexperienced, to matured skill without physical allure. Then, too, our present system of theatrical production has taught us to expect all our actors to "look the part," and we have come to the point where a Juliet who looks about sixteen but who perhaps can not read a line of blank verse respectably, gives more illusion to many of us than an actress obviously matured in face and figure, though she reads like an angel and controls all the emotional stops. But in most cases, probably, what actually happens is that we are deceived by the charm of youth into estimating a player's promise as too high, and the capacity for artistic growth is really not in her. All of which is rather a long preamble, to introduce Miss Margaret Anglin!

It was more than twenty years ago when Miss Anglin, then a member of the Empire Theatre stock company, surprised the town by her performance of Mrs. Dane, in Henry Arthur Jones's play. She had youth and beauty, and a promise which even then amounted almost to fulfillment. A quarter of a century later, coming back to New York after an absence of two or three years, at a time when the stage is peculiarly sterile of first rate talent, Miss Anglin, the matured artist, is nightly filling the theatre by sole virtue of her art. The play in which she is now acting, "The Woman of Bronze," is an adaptation made from the French by Mr. Paul Kester, and seems quaintly ancient, almost as if Clara Morris should have played in it. It is of the stage, stagey; and Mr. Kester's adaptation apparently hasn't helped matters much. Why, then, is the play being given night after night to a full theatre? It is full as a tribute to power, to the matured mastery of a fine actress. Let the devotees of "the new art of the theatre" cry never so loudly, let dramatists write, and scene-painters paint, and directors command; when all is done that they can do, the actor still holds the master key, and always will as long as the theatre endures, even the theatre of celluloid and sheet.

The fundamental appeal of the theatre is the communication of emotion to the spectator, the awaking of his sympathetic participation in the play. A great actor can arouse strong emotion in a very poor play, and a poor actor can fail to arouse it in a very good one. And when the choice boils down to seeing a fine actress in a poor play or seeing a poor actress in a poor play—which is about the case at present—it is small wonder that Miss Anglin is, as the Broadway phrase goes, "doing business."

Yet, after all, what a pity that talents such as hers have to be employed on something less than second rate; less, because the play has no relation whatever to our

present lives and problems, nor does it, on the other hand, create anything lovely and ideal. A hackneyed, conventional, triangle play, which without Miss Anglin's acting, would be incredible. But so searching are the tones and inflections of her voice, so assured and natural are all her expressions of the emotions, so complete a sense of mastery over every resource of her art does she impart, that you sit in the theatre, while she is on the stage, almost persuaded that you are witnessing the sufferings of a worthy human being, and, if you are not too sophisticated, suffering with her, in fact. Mrs. Fiske is, perhaps, the only other actress on our stage to-day who can so command the emotions and who gives that soul-satisfying sense of reserve power, of an art fully controlled, held firmly in leash, and ready for any test that may be put upon it. Can no American write for Miss Anglin a drama of the hour, of our actual lives and problems, which shall be worthy of her art? It should be a drama of deep emotional appeal, intellectual weight, and some biting comedy, to fit the range of her powers. A simple order! Alas, if it takes twenty years to make an actor, how long does it take to make a dramatist?

WALTER PRICHARD EATON.

LETTERS TO THE EDITORS.

LAND VALUATION.

SIRS: Mr. John Murray's letter in your issue of 13 October on the taxation of land-values in Britain, strikes me as being something of a joke. Mr. Murray seems to be under the strange impression that Mr. Lloyd George's departmental valuation was dropped because "the whole scheme was based on valuations," and he suggests in its place that land should be valued only in the case of an obdurate landlord when he is haled before a court having compulsory powers to seize his land on a valuation. But this is merely Gilbertian. Mr. Murray is not in favour of departmental land-valuation or of land-value taxation of any kind. No wonder he is such a devoted supporter of Mr. Lloyd George, who was responsible first for thwarting and then for destroying the efforts of the land-values movement. As an excuse for the action of the British Government in first destroying the Land Valuation Department in 1915 and now in 1920 dropping the valuation and the paltry duties that were imposed in 1910, Mr. Murray has the hardihood to suggest that valuations of land "are dangerously conventional." But one is tempted to ask whether the valuation of the court in the case of the obdurate landlord would not also be "dangerously conventional"? No doubt a valuation made in the time of William and Mary, over two hundred years old, is beneficently conventional and more to Mr. Murray's liking. The object of the so-called land budget of 1909 was to obtain a landlords', not a governmental, valuation of the land of the country so that a new source of taxation could be found for the increasing needs of the State. It was recognized by the Government then in office that land was the basis of subsistence and, as Mr. Murray says, that it is "limited in total amount"; and "can not be increased."

Can Mr. Murray tell us what better factor in production could be valued for the purposes of taxation? Mr. Murray realizes that "those who hold land are virtually monopolists" but he does not seem to see the economic absurdity of the State permitting anyone to hold a monopoly of the basis of subsistence. "These monopolists," says Mr. Murray, "can shift taxation, as a rule, to the users of land, or to the eventual purchasers." Surely not even a professorial political economist will agree with Mr. Murray that the landlord can shift a tax on land-values. He ought to know that land-values taxation would bring landlords into competition to find land-users; and such a proceeding would make it impossible for "the monopolists" to shift the tax.

As a land-reformer, however, your correspondent is unique. His solution of the problem is simplicity itself. He says, "Let the private user of land have the right to take the obdurate landowner to a court. His plight can be easier relieved judicially than by taxation." That, after all, may be one way of getting valuation; for all landlords are obdurate, and all that private users of land would have to do under Mr. Murray's scheme would be to see that all landlords were brought to court. The courts, having thus compulsory powers to make a valuation of all land, would in time give us another "Domesday Book." On second thought, Mr. Murray's scheme

is not without merits, and one of them is that his may be a surer way of getting a real valuation than the way offered by Mr. Lloyd George in 1910. I am, etc.,
Chicago, Ill.

RICHARD CLAUGHTON.

CANVASSING MR. PINCHOT'S VOTE.

SIRS: Mr. Amos Pinchot's tribute to the Republican nominee in your current issue is interesting reading; but he is altogether too sanguine about killing the Democratic party. That party is like the Florida 'possum which may be beaten to a jelly; but, unless beheaded, will crawl away to return to your chicken-coop after a few nights of "reorganization." Mr. Pinchot's better plan would be to cast a protest vote. Of the two evils he would do well to choose neither. I am, etc.,

AN OLD PESSIMIST.

SIRS: In his entertaining article in your issue of 20 October, Mr. Amos Pinchot says in effect: I shall give my vote to the Republican party, not that the Republican candidate needs it, but "with the liberal cohorts massed under the Republican eagles . . . a great historic result might be won, to wit, the annihilation of the Democratic party during the next few years." Here is another kind of negative vote, and for a new reason! Mr. Harding has occasion to feel flattered indeed! Will all the Forty-eighters, I wonder, follow Mr. Pinchot's lead and give their votes to Mr. Harding?

Our intellectuals are considerably troubled over this election; they don't like the leading candidates at all, but most of them feel that they must vote for somebody just the same. They are, in fact, in the predicament that Thoreau describes. Thoreau in his anarchistic heart was trying to disregard governments, being convinced that they were altogether an abomination. But every now and then men would, to use his expression, "pursue and paw [him] with their dirty institutions," and he would be compelled to take notice. Then, if he voted for something that turned out to be bad, he would have no redress because his antagonist would say he was as much to blame as anybody; if he voted a nay and conditions were bad, he would be blamed again; and if he didn't vote at all, he would be told he had no right to complain, having registered no vote. So Thoreau came to the conclusion that on the whole the best thing to do is to vote and take the chance of what you vote for turning out well.

But to return to Mr. Pinchot; is he logical in his reasoning? Supposing a man wanted to engage in the manufacture of a commodity in a locality where there were already two big firms and several smaller ones engaged in the same business, would he, while waiting to procure a good site for erecting a factory of his own, do well to throw all the business he could secure to the biggest firm in the hope of injuring the next biggest? Would he not, if he were wise, distribute his business among the little fellows who were never likely to get so strong as to possess a monopoly? By adding to the strength of the biggest concern, he would be only making a more formidable competitor for himself to battle against when his own organization gets in motion. Surely Mr. Pinchot wouldn't follow this procedure if he were in business. Why then recommend it in politics? Would it not be better to spread the votes around and thus keep the big fellow from getting a monopoly, and so leave room for the new party organization of which Mr. Pinchot dreams? Would not that be better tactics than the course Mr. Pinchot advises? Has Mr. Pinchot forgotten the existence of Mr. Christensen of the Farmer-Labour party, and Mr. Debs? And there is Mr. Macauley, too, the Single Tax candidate. Would it not be something to the good if the Single Tax party could be strengthened a bit? At any rate, there is a better choice than Cox or Harding, and there are excellent reasons, even for Mr. Pinchot, for voting other tickets than the Republican or Democratic. I am, etc.,

M. G.

OLD, FORGOTTEN, FAR-OFF THINGS.

SIRS: In this country, why is it that one meets with so much intolerance on the subject of Irish freedom? The upper-middle class, I have found everywhere to be the greatest offenders. Why are they who, during the war, were the very staunchest upholders of Mr. Wilson's self-determination policy, so blind to-day when it comes to the application of that principle to Ireland? On the other hand, the lower-middle and working-classes seem to see the connexion clearly enough. There is not only no sympathy, but no tolerance amongst our so-called "educated" people. I have encountered minds like stone-walls when discussing this vital subject.

What is the reason for this attitude? Do these people, who consider themselves such good, patriotic Americans, forget their own history, and with it our greatest achievement, the War of Independence? Do they forget the days of 1776, or have we come so far from the spirit of those days that they are gone beyond recall? If it was right for those thirteen little colonies to rise in rebellion against English tyranny, why are we so unwilling to grant that same right to the Ireland of to-day? The circumstances may be different but is not the motive the same—the winning of independence? The argument that "the Irish are unable to rule themselves," is too stupid to consider for one moment. Were there not people in '76, not only here and in England, but in every country throughout Europe, who said: "Those foolish little colonies, do they think they can get on without England?" But, given our chance, we seem to have done fairly well.

Does not, then, our history, and our own bitter experience give us the right to extend to Ireland our whole-hearted moral support? More than that, perhaps, we can not do, but is it asking too much that we should at least give that much? If so, let us, at least, look on the bitter struggle that is now going on in Ireland with a tolerant eye. Not because it is Ireland, but because we are witnessing the desperate fight of a small nation striving to attain independence, that same independence we won so long ago. A rebellion of this kind, in our own times, should bring those far-off days of '76 very near to us; but, alas, in the case of many Americans those great days seem very far away.

I am constantly trying to find an explanation for this intolerant attitude, and until I can discover a more satisfactory answer, must content myself with the truth of the saying that there are "none so blind as those that will not see." To those who differ with me I should have been dismissed as a "pro-German," not very long ago; but as that phrase is as out of style as a crinoline, and the latest fashion in abuse has swung to "bolshivism," I am of course a "bolshhevik," or at the very mildest, a "socialist"!

But I do not consider myself to belong to either of these parties; instead I hold my attitude towards Ireland to be the only one worthy of a true American: a whole-hearted appreciation of a vital cause, as real and as true as that upon which our own nation is founded. I am, etc.,

New York City.

PAULINE KING.

WHAT THOMAS JEFFERSON SAID.

SIRS: In a recent issue of the *Freeman* Mr. Norman Thomas, in endeavouring to answer Mr. Amos Pinchot on the question of abolishing privilege, made the usual argument of the Christian socialist and at one point used the frequently misquoted dictum of Thomas Jefferson about the "best government is that which governs least." What Jefferson actually wrote to John W. Eppes was (the italics are mine), "I hold the world is governed too much. I hold that *when we have established justice* and so legislated as to prevent the strong from preying upon the weak, *then* the least governed country is the best governed country."

This patron saint of so many unreconstructed, unterrified and even bourbon Democrats would probably be a Republican of the progressive vintage if he were alive to-day. But even Jefferson was by no means infallible as is revealed by his correspondence; thus on page 295 of volume IV. one may read: "Were our State a pure democracy, in which all the inhabitants should meet together to transact business, there would yet be excluded from their deliberations—(1) infants, until arrived at years of discretion; (2) women, who, to prevent deprivation of morals, and ambiguity of issue, could not mix promiscuously in the public meetings of men; (3) slaves, from whom the unfortunate state of things with us, takes away the right of will and of property." I am, etc.,

Rouses Point, N. Y.

HENRY J. GIBBONS.

RECOGNIZING MEXICO.

SIRS: To recognize or not to recognize Mexico seems to be a question agitating Washington. One dispatch states that recognition will be granted "to-morrow"; the following day we are assured that the election of General Obregon is not satisfactory, for it is merely a change of administration, not a new government, whatever that may mean, and that a new government must appear before we can deign to recognize our neighbour. Would a bolshevik regime be sufficient change to satisfy Washington? What is needed, far more than further changes in Mexico City, is a new administration in Washington, one that will deal fairly with Mexico. Yet when have we ever seen the administration that extended an honest friendship to Mexico?

There was, says *Excelsior*, a certain landlord who possessed a most fractious tenant. This tenant broke the plumbing and the windows, defiled the walls with insulting inscriptions, refused for three years to pay his rent, and when the landlord appeared to remonstrate, the tenant threatened him with bodily injury. In the course of time this occupant moved, and another rented the house. This latter was all that the former was not; he repaired the damages, paid his rent promptly; treated the landlord with the greatest of courtesy; what was the result? Within two months his rent was doubled, and he was told that if he did not pay on the dot he would be thrown into the street!

This, according to the paper quoted, is a parallel of the temper of the last two governments in Mexico. I venture to disagree with *Excelsior*, believing that history will record President Carranza as one of the greatest of the Mexicans, who saved his country from annexation, at least during his time. But as a matter of comparison, *Excelsior's* statement is of interest: The Carranza Government paid no interest on its foreign debt, pursued an intensely nationalistic policy, treated overseas ambassadors with scant ceremony and promptly expelled them when they assumed an arrogant tone (they should have been expelled), and generally conducted itself as it saw fit. In consequence, it was hated and, perhaps, somewhat feared, but it was let alone.

The de la Huerta Government has promised to renew payments at once on its debt; foreigners are treated with more consideration than nationals; it is most obsequious in its dealings with other nations; and as a consequence France and England are contemplating recognizing Mexico as a prelude to and for the purpose of presenting exaggerated claims for damages, with the threat that if they are not accepted and paid on the spot, the claimants will push the United States to overthrow the present regime and establish a "satisfactory" government.

Can we, then, do otherwise than echo *Excelsior's* hope that there be no recognition? I am, etc.,
Humboldt, Tenn.

JOHN E. KELLY.

BOOKS.

AUTHENTIC POETRY.

THE chief measure of authenticity in poetry is to convey oneself unmistakably to the reader. Poetry that is inspired always presents a dazzling, sudden, full-face view of the poet. The recognition may be momentary like a flash of lightning in a black sky, but it is there nevertheless. When the reader feels instinctively that he is receiving the sometimes abrupt revelation of the writer's spirit, of his heart or of some vital mood, there is no question then but that the poetry is authentic. Mr. Arthur Machen said years ago that the test of literature is ecstasy. The test of poetry is ecstasy and recognition.

When Mr. Edwin Arlington Robinson¹ sits down to write a poem, one who is at all familiar with his work knows that he does not force a poem from the point of his pen, that he uses no formula and devises no mould. Rather does the poem force the pen. It dictates to the heart and the brain of the writer. It forces the poet (sometimes, we feel, even unwillingly) to reveal himself to the reader. He is not interested in excessive alliteration, cacophonous reiterations or bewildering medleys of rhyme-schemes. He throws the window open and shows the reader meditations of a singular loftiness, conclusions and presentations that have their foundations upon the paradoxical moods of the heart. He is a lover of life even if life does not love him greatly. He has focused himself for a deliberate and meticulous study of humanity. The figures in his books are always comments upon existence. He has developed a perspective, and by means of it views man at full length.

And because he is so sincere, so serious in his attitude toward art we may always recognize his poetry. He has developed a style that is his alone, a perfected

metre that expresses himself and is never consciously developed out of the desire to write a popular poem. This metre is marked by a precision in the placing of words that is unerring. He never makes attempts at "fine writing" for the benefit of dazzling his reader. Occasionally the emotion of his subject causes him to flare into spontaneous moments of unforgettable colour but these moments are such natural developments of his theme that the reader never considers them to be forced or allows them to dominate his memory of the poem to the ultimate foundering of the thought. And here again is a great virtue that belongs peculiarly to Mr. Robinson among American poets. His work is always packed with thought; and one wonders if this might not be partially responsible for the slowness with which the American public has accepted the poet.

If we turn to Mr. Robinson's latest volume of short pieces, "The Three Taverns," we shall find crystallized there all those virtues that give the poet his eminence among American writers. It is a book that goes side by side with "The Man Against the Sky," an exhibition of calm maturity. There are no falterings, no temporizings with the themes. Mr. Robinson is now at the height of his powers, for he has assured himself of what he desires to say and the long years of insistent application have perfected his technical abilities. In this book are to be found his rounded portraiture of personalities, his analytical dissections of the heart and soul, his dark and serious deliberations upon life and fate. At moments there are illuminating hints of that fatalism that threads its quiet, contemplative way through his poetry. He can calm himself. He can restrain the heart-ache and say,

For we were still to learn
That earth has not a school where we may go
For wisdom, or for more than we may know,

and again,

Never mind;
If some of us were not so far behind,
The rest of us were not so far ahead.

One feels that the war and the turbid maelstrom of modern life with all its unreasonable developments, its smashing of ideals and its following empty will-o'-the-wisps, have darkened the poet's vision in some degree. Is there not here a wistful longing?—

Dark hills at evening in the west,
Where sunset hovers like a sound
Of golden horns that sang to rest
Old bones of warriors under ground,
Far now from all the bannered ways
Where flash the legions of the sun,
You fade—as if the last of days
Were fading, and all wars were done.

But Mr. Robinson's wistfulness is tempered by irony. His lip curls as he writes of the false prophets and demagogues in those fine sonnets "Demos" and "The Old King's New Jester":

Farther away than feet shall ever travel
Are the vague towers of our unbuilt State;
But there are mightier things than we to lead us,
That will not let us wait.
And we go on with none to tell us whether
Or not we've each a tether
Determining how fast or far we go;
And it is well, since we must go together,
That we are not to know.

If the old wrong and all its injured glamour
Haunts you by day and gives your night no peace,
You may as well, agreeably and serenely,
Give the new wrong its lease;
For should you nourish a too fervid yearning

¹"The Three Taverns." Edwin Arlington Robinson. New York: The Macmillan Co.

For what is not returning,
The vicious and unfused ingredient
May give you qualms—and one or two concerning
The last of your content.

"The Three Taverns" is not based alone on marginal notes about our modern existence, although one of the particular bright jewels in it is that deep and musical poem, "The Valley of the Shadow." Included are such splendid portraits as "The Three Taverns," (from which the book takes its name); "On the Way," a dramatic dialogue between Alexander Hamilton and Aaron Burr; and "Lazarus," a picture of the Biblical character after he had risen from the dead; an exalted and arresting picture of St. Paul; and "John Brown," a monologue by the old liberator ending with the significant line "I shall have more to say when I am dead." All these poems reveal Mr. Robinson at his best.

Beautiful images compact with thought, the surest test of true poetry, are plentiful throughout the book. One notes with delight such phrases as: "The commemorative wreckage of what others did not know"; "There were maidens very quiet, with no quiet in their eyes"; "There were creepers among catacombs where dull regrets were torches." And in "The False Gods" there is that beautiful line, referring to the ruin of one of the modern modes of our contemporary inorganic art: "Like an old shrine forgotten in a forest of new trees."

To those who have closely followed the work of Edwin Arlington Robinson, "The Three Taverns" will come, though none was really needed, as a final vindication. It is a big book and it grows with each reading. It is the work of lonely hours, of unflinching meditation and of authentic genius, if such a thing may be admitted to exist in these troublous times.

HERBERT S. GORMAN.

PROPHETS OF UTOPIA.

MR. ALFRED KNOPF is doing an invaluable service by giving us these reprints of the vital documents belonging to the period of economic and political ferment in England in the early part of the nineteenth century. It is only in recent years that the importance of that period has come to be realized; and even yet, the literature it produced has not been exhaustively studied. But we know enough about it, thanks to Mr. and Mrs. Webb, Mr. Graham Wallas, and other students, to recognize that it is idle for us to try to understand the inwardness of our present-day economic controversies unless we possess a fairly intimate knowledge of how those men thought and acted who first sought a way out of the confusion that followed the political revolution in France and the industrial revolution in England a century ago.

Of these men none is more significant than Robert Owen and William Lovett, whose autobiographies Mr. Knopf is publishing in his new series.¹ Indeed, it may be said that Owen and Lovett represent the two main elements in that vast agitation which constitutes the real history of the English people in the first half of the nineteenth century. And the point at issue between these two men has once more come to be the really significant question in public affairs. It should be said, however, at the outset that neither of these autobiographies is a wholly reliable historical document. Mr. Tawney, in his introduction to the Lovett volumes, points out that Lovett suffered certain limitations which make it impossible for us to accept his account of the Chartist movement without caution; and a comparison of Owen's "Life" with contemporary records will reveal a number of substantial discrepancies. This is not to be wondered at, for Owen was eighty-six years of age when he wrote the "Life"; and his habit of painting his own schemes and perform-

ances in the "roseate hues of early dawn" had not lessened with the passing of the years. He had, moreover, become a convert to spiritualism; and some of his later exploits in this shadowy region justify a critical attitude toward his record of even his own past.

For the proper understanding of the man it is necessary to remember that never to the end of his life did he abandon his idea that communistic settlements on the land provided a solution for the problems of the industrial revolution. He regarded both the co-operative movement and the new Trade Unions as mere halfway-houses to the final goal. When Owen returned to England from America in 1830 he found that certain groups of intelligent workers had begun to make experiments in co-operation. These were, indeed, not the first co-operative societies. But the movement had entered upon a new stage about 1823 with the establishment of the London Co-operative Society; and in 1829 there were in existence in England as many as four hundred productive and distributive societies on the co-operative plan. This was undoubtedly the fruitage of Owen's repeated pleas to the workers between 1817 and 1823 that they should pool their savings in a common capital fund for the purpose of instituting a communistic settlement; and there can be little doubt that the co-operative movement after 1825 was largely influenced by Owen's idea of establishing co-operative communities on the land.

Owen was never really interested in politics and it would be idle to describe him as a democrat. On the contrary, he quite definitely favoured a form of paternal government and, moreover, practised it in the settlements which he controlled. But he perceived that the co-operative movement provided the workers with the opportunity of working out their own salvation independently of the State. Henceforth, he quite deliberately preached the doctrine of political indifferentism. Whether he saw all that was implied in this position, it is impossible to say. It is interesting to realize that this was the context in which the word "socialism" appeared. Its first use was not in antithesis to individualism but to politicalism. This was about the year 1834, two years after the passing of the Reform Bill, when it was already clear to thoughtful artisans like William Lovett that the reform contained little hope for them. The first phase of the co-operative movement came to an end with the collapse of Owen's somewhat fantastic Labour Exchange in 1834—but Owen found plenty to do in the new and growing trade-union movement. He succeeded in injecting into these unions an idea which is only to be distinguished from modern syndicalism by its indifference to the State, for these unions proposed, certainly for a time, to become national producing societies.

From this point onward, Owen's influence passes into decline. It was partly due to the fact that his mind, which always had an apocalyptic and megalomaniac bias, ran amuck into vast schemes and splendid prophecies that failed to materialize. But his failure was also due to the growing sense among the workers that as long as the government and the instruments of power were a monopoly of the propertied classes there was little hope for them. The passing of the Reform Act of 1832, which virtually meant the enfranchisement of the bourgeoisie, hardly affected the industrial classes at all. But like Robert Owen's social idealism, the notion of political democracy spread among the workers; and the first significant product of this movement was the formation of the London Working Men's Association in 1836. A year later, the Association published the People's Charter, from which the Chartist movement derives its name. Of all this, the head and front was William Lovett, for he was the founder of the Association and the author of the Charter.

Chartism is usually treated as a purely political movement, but this is a mistake, now happily being corrected by the exact scholarship which has gone to the writing of such works as the late Mark Hovell's "The Chartist Movement" and Mr. Beer's "History of English Socialism." Chartism was a movement to secure the political

¹ "The Life of Robert Owen." "The Life of William Lovett." 2 vols. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

conditions necessary to certain social purposes. These social purposes, however, were largely forgotten in the commercial prosperity of the third quarter of the century, and the extension of the franchise and other democratic reforms were pursued as being in some sense intrinsically valuable or as being necessarily involved in the idea of "progress." But the fact remains that the diffusion of political power has done little or nothing to affect the distribution of economic power. The thought of "industrial democracy" which made some way in the later 'thirties is, in these latter days, having a new birth; but it is questionable whether it will fare any better under existing political institutions than it did in the days when the legislative machinery was still in process of metamorphosis. Indeed, modern Guild Socialists hold a doctrine the very reverse of that of the early Chartists. They affirm that political power is in the hands of those who wield economic power, however the political state may be organized. And as far as there is a relevant appeal to history, this view seems to be well founded. Whether a different story might have been written had Chartism not degenerated into a physical-force movement, it is of course impossible to say; but it is at least clear that the later achievement of the Chartist programme has brought no social and economic advance commensurate with the hopes of those who formulated the Charter. If this is no justification for a return to Owen's political indifference, it is surely good and sufficient reason for a critical scrutiny of our alleged democratic institutions.

Robert Owen was, says Leslie Stephen, "one of those intolerable bores who are the salt of the earth." Hazlitt took him as one of his instances of "the man of one idea" and poked a good deal of good-natured fun at him. But apart from this *idée fixe* and his pertinacity in promoting it, he seems to have possessed a singularly beautiful nature. Brougham, Harriet Martineau, Leigh Hunt, Southey and most of the outstanding personalities of the time bear consenting witness to his integrity and humanity. Had he possessed a mind as disciplined as his character was blameless, he might have exercised a leadership that would have given us a very different history of England during the last century and more.

William Lovett was a man of no less integrity and courage than Owen. But he lacked Owen's humane and generous spirit. His politics were largely the politics of resentment; he was, as Francis Place described him, "a man of melancholy temperament soured with the perplexities of the world." But he had a keener scent for actualities than Owen ever had. Lovett lacked the spaciousness of personality which makes for greatness, but he had the pertinacity and the grasp of detail that ensured that what he put his hand to he put through.

RICHARD ROBERTS.

TWO AMERICANS ABROAD.

Two American citizens, General Charles H. Sherrill and Mr. Victor Murdock, have been infringing around the Far East a bit of late, and each has given us a book¹ on his observations; and, after the custom of transients in those ancient lands, each offers a solution of the Far Eastern problem. Christianity and democracy are what Mr. Murdock, Kansas editor, reformer and former congressman, projects in order to make the Orient a going concern. General Sherrill, on the other hand, frankly states that he is opposed to democracy, save for Anglo-Saxons, the elect of God. As for Christianity, General Sherrill certainly finds nothing in its favour in Korea. "It left the Korean converts as ignorant and filthy as it found them," he says; and he believes that Japanese imperialism has been much more beneficial for the hermit kingdom. It is to be presumed, however, that General Sherrill is willing to concede Christianity for Anglo-Saxons;—for our part we hope that both democracy and Christianity will some day be tried out in Anglo-Saxon lands.

General Sherrill's narrative makes it plain that in his travels he talked with only the best people. The idea of the self-determination of peoples therefore has no attractions for him, as there are, of course, inferior peoples who should naturally be ruled by their betters. In the Far East the rôle of superiority is naturally held by the Japanese. They are an eminently intelligent and sanitary people, and they have adopted successfully the unscrupulous imperialism of the Western nations. Hence they are the logical masters of backward, pacifist China, and they should also be allowed to seize Eastern Siberia, thus rendering a great service to civilization by stopping "this Siberian outlet to [Russian] anarchy," and incidentally diverting their expansion away from our own 100 per cent Philippines. It is curious to note that the author refers amiably to the "benevolent communism" of Confucius, but places modern communism in Russia beyond the pale.

In advocating Japanese hegemony in China and the Japanese annexation to Eastern Siberia, General Sherrill recites with pride Japan's success in conferring the blessings of civilization upon the reluctant Koreans. The Japanese achievements in the hermit kingdom he compares with those of the British in Egypt. It is, of course, very regrettable that so far neither the Korean nor the Egyptian people seem to have greatly appreciated the uplift of their imperial conquerors, and one fears that the Eastern Siberians would be very likely to display an equal ingratitude, which would scarcely conduce towards "settlement" in those regions. Deplorably enough, the more rigidly law and order, as advocated by General Sherrill and the best people, is forcibly imposed on these backward races, the more frequently do they send delegations to Moscow to discuss the hopeful promise of "anarchy." It may be true, as General Sherrill states on page 170, that Japan is overpopulated and must have more territory, or it may be true, as he states on page 224, that "Japan is not excessively populated" (as a matter of fact its population has only half the density of that of Belgium). In either case Japan's neighbours can not be counted on to welcome her encroachments, even if General Sherrill's book should be freely distributed among them as propaganda.

Mr. Murdock, on the other hand, is not interested in changing the sovereignty of the territory he visited: his book is simply a narrative of a trip into China that took him rather far into the interior and away from the usual route of the tourist. Mr. Murdock is plainly amazed at a people whose customs and thought differ so widely from those that obtain in Kansas. He confesses that he can not measure them according to the Kansas yardstick, but none the less he does not hesitate to lecture them on the error of their heathen ways. "Far be it from me to butt into a situation that is four thousand years old," he remarks in a deprecatory moment, but his reforming instinct constantly brushes aside his scruples:

Now, it is impossible to understand China. The country simply does not parse. If a procession passes along the river-bank at night, firing crackers, beating gongs and yelling, you can't find out why, and you quit trying. If a boat-load of men at eight o'clock in the morning come drifting down the current in a rowboat, beating gongs and playing pipes, you want to know what it is all about. You won't find out. I am convinced that a lot of these Chinese do things they can't explain themselves. But although your curiosity is likely to callous, China remains the country of constant surprises.

And so a Chinese traveller in these United States might write after witnessing the astounding inanity of one of our presidential conventions, indeed as compared with the normal phenomena of our political life, processions with gongs and firecrackers seem almost prudishly sane.

It is unfortunate, we think, that Mr. Murdock elected to write this story of his travels, not in English, but in journalese. Some three hundred pages of etymological "jazz" places an undue strain on the reader's literary nerves. And this is more the pity because the author can command good, plain English when he wants to; his story of "A Certain Rich Man of Wanhshien" and his tale

¹ "Have We a Far Eastern Policy?" Charles H. Sherrill. Introduction by David Jayne Hill. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.
"China the Mysterious and Marvellous." Victor Murdock. New York: Fleming H. Revell Company.

of the Manchu city of King Chow are told with simplicity and dignity. The aristocratic Manchu conquerors in King Chow, it appears, lived in Olympian splendour on tribute exacted from the supine Chinese inhabitants. With the coming of the republic, the tribute ended, and the proud Manchus, incapacitated for self-support by fifteen generations of tribute, were soon reduced to selling their treasures and valuables in order to live. Next their furniture went, and finally they began to sell their gorgeous palaces.

Brick by brick the big houses have come down and the brick has been carted off until now King Chow is a pile of whitish rubbish, a skeleton behind its high stone walls. And in the midst of these dust heaps at King Chow are little wind-shaken mat huts. In the dirt and powdered mortar live the Manchus. Around about them are the ruins of King Chow and in their hearts only dumb despair and mocking memories.

So passes King Chow, the Manchu city. I saw its men, big strapping fellows still, with great dignity in their sunken eyes. I saw its women, tall, stately women, still with their elaborate *coiffures*, their normal feet, their long skirts, sadder, all of them, in their bearing than the men. The bricks of their houses are all gone. And after they are gone—what? As I watched their tragic figures in the midst of this destruction, desolation and decay, I asked myself the question again and again.

There is much honest entertainment in Mr. Murdock's book, both for the sophisticated and the groundlings, but General Sherrill's will appeal only to those suffering from international astigmatism.

HAROLD KELLOCK.

BIOGRAPHY WITH A VENGEANCE.

THAT George Meredith will remain always an arresting figure to those who are interested in the literature of the epoch to which he belonged is certain; that he will retain in a wider sense the high position he won in the estimation of his own generation is problematic. At present, to those who are sensitive to the weather-signs of literature, it is clear that, while the star of his great contemporary Thomas Hardy is steadily and surely rising, that of George Meredith is on the wane. There was a time, however, when the witty and epigrammatic writing of the versatile cerebralist seemed completely to overshadow his more direct and simple rival. That time is over. Moreover, it must be said that if the real purpose of Mr. Ellis's new biography¹ of the Victorian novelist was to give the general public a glimpse of the actual character of its subject, Mr. Ellis has achieved his end with a vengeance. In a thousand statements, side-notes, descriptions, a figure has been evoked—selfish, conceited, and extremely unpleasing. As one turns over the pages and follows the years of George Meredith's long life, chapter by chapter, one comes to take an almost personal dislike to him as he is here portrayed, so naïvely, by his enthusiastic cousin.

In his relations with his first wife, in his relations with his unfortunate son Arthur, with Rossetti, with Swinburne, with Peacock and, in fact, with almost everybody with whom he had to do, Meredith is shown to have had the same exacting, restless, self-absorbed, dyspeptic spirit. However bitter his quarrel with his first wife, it was surely hardly in accordance with a generous and magnanimous mind to have allowed the unhappy lady to be buried, as is recorded, without a stone to mark the place of her grave. And however much he may have been vexed by his son's attitude towards his second marriage, the story of their long estrangement and the boy's exile abroad is not very pleasant reading. Even Mr. Ellis's assurance that "at intervals Meredith continued to write to his son long letters containing good advice as to health and morals" scarcely reassures us. Nor is it very agreeable to learn that at dinner-parties it was the great man's custom "to exercise his wit at the expense of his own household." In truth, there is hardly a single incident recorded in these pages which is not prejudicial to our estimate of the character of the novelist. Whether he is "cathedralizing" with his second love in Norwich, or

speaking "for effect before undergraduates at Cambridge," or "peremptorily refusing to sign a memorial for the remission of some portion of Wilde's sentence," he is made to appear in no very attractive light.

There is, however, scattered throughout the book, a quantity of what might be termed "literary gossip" which makes excellent reading. Thus it is good to have the mystery surrounding Meredith's birth cleared up once for all. For years the rumour was current in certain circles that he was the natural son of Bulwer Lytton, a legend that George Meredith apparently was in no way eager to discourage. The reason for his reticence on the subject will ever remain a mystery, says Mr. Ellis, who declines "to believe that it was entirely owing to a desire to hide the fact that his father and grandfather were tailors." There are others, however, who are evidently of a different opinion, for in a tiny foot-note we read that Mr. Wilfred Scawen Blunt somewhere in his diary says that "tailoring parentage was the secret trouble of Meredith's life." The book will also appeal to those who concern themselves with discovering the prototypes upon whom the characters of great works of fiction have been based. Written without any distinction of style, Mr. Ellis's contribution belongs to that class of biographical work which owes its existence to the fact that some one or other has known, or been connected with, a famous man and is able to satisfy, by the composition of a book of this kind, the promptings of his own personal egotism.

LLEWELYN POWYS.

VERSES POLITE AND IMPOLITE.

JUDGING by his volume of poems¹ it is obvious that Mr. Francis Brett Young is a cultivated, quiet gentleman who writes verses as an amusement for leisure hours. The type is by no means uncommon. Horace is the outstanding example, and there are others. Mr. Young writes freely of his experiences, such as they are: the sights and sounds of the English landscape, tropical campaigning in Africa, longing for home, visits to the Russian Ballet. The difficulty with these experiences is not that they are unimportant. Every experience is, or should be, important to a true poet. The difficulty is that Mr. Young has not made his verse the true instrument of these experiences. He writes about them, rather than records them. And the way in which he writes about them is by echoing other poets. In this respect also, Mr. Young is true to type. To have read and enjoyed Keats and to be able to write a Keatsian sonnet is, to such minds, the test of a poet's ability. But it must be perfectly apparent to anyone who thinks about poetry, that to write as Keats wrote is merely to copy a certain trick of diction; while to feel as Keats felt, and to employ this feeling on subjects beyond the range of Keats's purview, is to be a poet. Mr. Young understands this fact perhaps better than his readers. In several of these pages, such as "Invocation," "Lament," "Dead Poets," "Slender Themes," he has shown very clearly that he knows the difference between a real poet and a maker of verses. Moreover, to the patient reader it must be quite apparent that Mr. Young fails even in this latter capacity. His verses, as verses, are neither so smooth nor well-written as, say, Flecker's. They are cluttered with inversions and ridden with banal commonplace. Yet, for all that, Mr. Young has a place in the last Georgian Anthology.

Mr. Osbert Sitwell, the author of "Argonaut and Juggernaut,"² is also obviously a cultivated gentleman who writes verses as an amusement for himself and others. His variation of the type is by no means uncommon, and Petronius—if we accept the ordinary ascription of the Satyricon to Nero's friend—belonged to it. Mr. Sitwell's experiences comprise English landscape, the great war, and—again like Mr. Brett Young—visits to the Russian Ballet. The difference between his Pegasus and that of Mr. Young is, that the latter is a respectable, stable-bred

¹ "Poems, 1916-1918." Francis Brett Young. New York: E. P. Dutton and Co.

² "Argonaut and Juggernaut." Osbert Sitwell. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

¹ "George Meredith: His Life and Friends in Relation to His Work." S. M. Ellis. New York: Dodd, Mead and Co.

animal, trained to a jog-trot, while the former is a skittish creature, shying violently at every obstacle. There is no other difference. Mr. Sitwell is thought by many, and doubtless considers himself, to be extremely wild and daring, when in reality he is merely a bad rider of his hobby. As I have said, it will not do to write like Keats. Neither will it do to write like T. S. Eliot, Marinetti, the Imagists, Henri de Regnier, Laforgue, or Sacheverell Sitwell. Mr. Osbert Sitwell tries to make verse like all these other poets. But, like Mr. Young, he succeeds only in writing about his themes, never in recording them. The only pieces in this volume in which he betrays genuine feeling are some of the *vers libre* efforts written in protest against the attitude of society towards the war. These are quite good in their way. The only trouble with them is that they are not *vers libre*, but prose.

Neither of these poets, then, has anything really to say. Mr. Sitwell's jokes are, it is true, rather better than Mr. Brett Young's solemnities. But an intelligent mind might, perhaps, find equal pleasure in witnessing Mr. Young's writhings with the technique of Keats, Wilde, and Flecker, as in seeing Mr. Sitwell attempt the style of T. S. Eliot. Below a certain level, all writers of verse are pretty much on a par; and the most that can be said for either Mr. Young or Mr. Sitwell is that they have attempted, but have not succeeded, in attaining the distinction they seek.

JOHN GOULD FLETCHER.

SHORTER NOTICES.

A SECOND volume of Czecho-Slovak folk- and fairy-tales, rendered into English by Parker Fillmore, bears the title of "The Shoe-Maker's Apron."¹ Here are a score of stories, drawn from original sources, and retold by a writer whose interest in the subject of folk-lore has not been permitted to detract from his skill in relating a story. Mr. Fillmore has contributed an introduction in which the kinship of the various tales is traced, and the reader will easily recognize some old friends from Grimm and other collections. Fairies appear to be pretty much the same the world over, regardless of nationalities, a fact which politicians have shamefully neglected in their international patchwork. Even the illustrations to this volume, by the Czech artist Jan Matulka, will speak in a familiar tongue to any American child who is fortunate enough to have retained a few illusions.

L. B.

THE quip is the cornerstone of newspaper humour, and upon this rock, consciously or unconsciously, the pressman must build his chuckle. Hewing light verse to adorn a daily column is an exercise in which buoyancy battles with restraints—not the least of which is the necessity to stir the risibilities of commuters, and commuters in no mental condition to absorb the more delicate flavours of wit. Faced with the discipline of a daily void to be filled, it is not surprising that the humorist occasionally discards the rapier for the trowel, and gives his tower of ivory a stucco exterior. Of its kind, Edwin Meade Robinson's "Piping and Panning"² is of a pleasant quality. No man may trifle with the Muse day after day with impunity, but Mr. Robinson has been able to command her support in a fair average of instances. His book discloses a nimble fancy, a facile dominion of vocabulary and verse forms, and a ready wit.

L. B.

THE author of "Children in the Mist."³ is justified in disclaiming animosity to the Negro. Her book, as she says in an introductory note, portrays Negro individuals as circumstances and white man's negligence have moulded them. Unfortunately, while Mrs. Martin writes with the authoritative manner of one who has known the black man intimately, she has, as she concedes, laid no emphasis in her tales upon Negroes who have, to use her phrase, forged ahead. The result is an obvious struggle between the complacency which comes of having met coloured people as servants chiefly, and the feeling that it is inconsistent to deny them opportunity and to charge their race with the consequences. The struggle is reflected in a desire to explain and to moralize in the course of the narrative.

¹ "The Shoe-Maker's Apron." Retold by Parker Fillmore. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Howe.

² "Piping and Panning." Edwin Meade Robinson. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Howe.

³ "Children in the Mist." George Madden Martin. New York: D. Appleton and Co.

Sometimes the author almost tumbles off the ragged edge of English into an abyss where fragments of newspapers whiz past the ear. But she is sensitive to the qualities of people, black or white, to the music of speech and the beauty of her scenes. In "Children of the Mist" Mrs. Martin has accomplished an effective reminder of the neglect in imaginative writing of the Negro individual and his adjustment to a white civilization.

H. J. S.

MR. ARNOLD BENNETT has not, in "Our Women,"¹ contributed any very original opinions on the vexed questions of sex differences. His book consists of a series of light and amusing essays which one feels were written mainly for the purpose of explaining to the uninitiated in as inoffensive a manner as possible, what all the to-do is about. Despite Mr. Bennett's well-known feminist sympathies, he has had the temerity in a chapter entitled "Are men superior to women?" to affirm his belief in favour of male pre-eminence with regard to creative imagination and intellectual power. "It is not a question," he says, "of a slight difference, as, for example, the difference between the relative proportionate sizes of the male and the female brain—it is a question of an overwhelming and constitutional difference, a difference which stupendously remains after every allowance has been made for inequality of opportunity. . . . The literature of the world can show at least fifty male poets greater than any woman poet. . . . No woman at all has achieved either painting or sculpture that is better than second rate." There are some well-written chapters concerning the supreme importance of securing for women economic independence and it is pleasant to think that Mr. Bennett's popularity as a writer of fiction will ensure their being read by a wide public, which, in a general way, does not interest itself in this kind of subject. It is evident, also, that Mr. Bennett fully realizes the fact that almost every iniquity in the world, if traced far enough back, would be found to have its roots in the mud of economics. The book is diverting to read, but is not without that vein of vulgarity which mars so much of Mr. Bennett's work.

L. P.

A REVIEWER'S NOTE-BOOK.

FROM a letter of Sidney Lanier to Bayard Taylor: "I could never describe to you what a mere drought and famine my life has been, as regards that multitude of matters which I fancy one absorbs when one is in an atmosphere of art, or when one is in conversational relationship with men of letters, with travellers, with persons who have either seen, or written, or done large things. Perhaps you know that, with us of the younger generation in the South since the war, pretty much the whole of life has been merely not dying."

YES, we know it; and we know that, for the sensitive man, the creative spirit in every non-material sphere, pretty much the whole of life has been merely not dying, not only in the generation after the Civil War but in both the succeeding generations, and not in the South only but in all America. But I wonder if almost the same thing might not be said of provincial Russia, of provincial Spain, of provincial Scotland, even of provincial France? Think of the desolate vistas of Chekhov and Zola; no place there for a poet! Think of Carlyle in his lonely farmhouse on the Scottish moors, dreaming of Germany and London; of Goethe, who tells us that for years he could not see an Italian coin or gem without physical misery, so great was his longing to be off to the South. Think of Leopardi, imprisoned by poverty and sickness in his father's grim castle in the Italian mountains, hungering and thirsting for the great world. And think of Flaubert, who had the great world and rejected it: "Do you know, in this Paris, which is so great," he writes, "one single house in which literature is talked about? And when it is incidentally approached, it is always in its subordinate and exterior aspects, the question of success, morality, utility, etc. It seems to me that I am becoming a fossil, a being without any relation to the creation that environs me." They are hard to please, these literary men! They seldom find their own habitat endurable. Do they change it? Then they lose their desire and turn into monks or

¹ "Our Women. Chapters on the Sex-discord." Arnold Bennett. New York: George H. Doran Co.

cynics. They are thinking of paradise all the time: how can they expect to find a world made of mud good enough for them? And yet the world forgives their insatiability and their inconstancy. The world itself in its discontent is always craving for something better; and these literary men, irritating as they are, project its goals and spur it on.

THEY have to move about and see the world; their growth depends on it. Each new form of life they see and share is like a new leaf or a new branch added to the trunk of their understanding. Lanier's complaint is peculiar only in its pathos; it is even, in its pathos, peculiarly American. The European man of letters will not put up with such a situation (the circumstances of Leopardi were altogether unique): he knows that literature is too important an affair and that his own growth is too important for him to stay at home wilting and moulting like a bird in a cage in a cellar. There is no commoner theme in European fiction, or in the literary history of Europe, than that of the young provincial aspirant who goes to the capital or burns his bridges and sets out to see the world. From "Rasselas" to "Jean-Christophe," and one could hardly imagine a wider span, that has been the Odyssey of literary youth. Pathos and resignation at thirty! Such a thing is only possible in a lonely, far-away Atlantis like this continent of ours, where the ancestral fire of our spiritual heritage burns low and the flame has been smothered by all the taboos of ignorance and misconception.

FOR it is not merely because we are so remote from the great world, from the "centre," that talent has languished here. Paris and Italy are not indeed so easily our capitals as they are the capitals of the young provincials of Europe; but there are ways of getting there, if we wish to, as some of us have discovered, and of living there, too, on snails, for example, or as beggars, thieves or journalists, as we have discovered also. If American writers have only recently, to any considerable extent, resorted to such measures, which are the time-honoured measures of the adventurous youth of the old world, if they have willingly languished in their provincial corners or have at least failed to exert themselves, ingeniously and sagaciously, to make their escape, it is because other reasons than their remoteness have held them back. What are these reasons? A notion of gentility that is foreign to the true literary life; a notion of patriotism that is also foreign to it; a disbelief in literary tradition and the importance of a "centre"; a positive belief, produced by this and based largely on a misconception of the teachings of Emerson and Whitman, or perhaps even on certain misconceptions of Emerson and Whitman themselves, in the possibility of an entirely "new" culture based on a total disregard of the experience of the rest of the world.

GENTILITY, to begin with: how far has gentility not limited, in America, the natural scope of action of the literary life! In all probability it never entered Lanier's head that a writer, if he wishes to accomplish what he is capable of, is bound not to countenance, but rather to eradicate from himself, the prepossessions, the habits, the spiritual attitudes of his neighbours. What greater service could a Southern writer have rendered his neighbours ultimately if, reacting wholesomely against his environment, he had let in the air upon that stale sentimentality which has kept the South so stagnant? Lanier's writings reek of this stale sentimentality; he thought of himself as the troubadour of the South; alas, the gorgeous robes of rhetoric he threw over its nakedness are to-day like so much moth-eaten plush; the South has had its poet in vain. If Lanier had been less loyal to his neighbours in the flesh, he might have been more loyal to them in the spirit; if he had not been such a good boy, if he had not put up so wistfully with his cage and his dark cellar and a life that was merely "not dying," if he had not tried to conform to the "best Southern ideals,"—then he might

have given the South a new ideal or, what is perhaps even more necessary in the South, a notion of reality. Is it because we have had in our history so much adventure of the material kind that we have scarcely thought of the other kind of adventure? Certain it is that, as regards adventure for its own sake, adventure for fun, adventure for experience, the sort of adventure on which the spirit feeds, we are the most inert of peoples: save for a Herman Melville now and then and a few sea-captains in the way of trade, the by-paths of the planet, over which for ages men have tramped for to admire and for to see, have known us not. Pioneering absorbed our adventurous impulses: our literary men have stayed at home, or followed in Europe the trails of home, as if upon them had fallen the responsibility of maintaining the respectable habits the pioneers had placed in jeopardy. Far from rejecting gentility, they have become its guardians.

AND the peculiar patriotism they have accepted has prevented them even from realizing that they were provincials. Here was a new world, and here, our fathers imagined, a new experiment had begun that was to supersede what the world had known as civilization. They did not ask themselves whether they, the Puritans, who had sacked the cathedrals and rejected so many of the sublime relics of the human adventure, were fitted to create a civilization or even to appreciate what a civilization is. With a handful of moral abstractions, the fruit of the narrowest experience, the world's great age, in their fancy, was about to begin anew. How could our poets, bred in this illusion, look upon themselves as exiles from any conceivable centre of humanity, as anything, in fact, but heirs of the ages on their own terrain? They might learn from Europe a few tricks of their trade, an extra language or two, some points of method, but they could not believe that the rest of the world had anything to teach them, as regards the experience of life, which they could not get at home. They were provincial because they did not know they were provincial and because all the assumptions of our history kept them from ever finding it out.

BUT what have we been witnessing these last twenty years? The vital ideas of Emerson and Whitman have been long since incorporated in the main body of European thought: the great tradition has engulfed them, as it is engulfing us also. Far from going off at a tangent, as our popular literature has done, our serious literature grapples more and more closely every day to that of Europe; it has developed, along with certain minor characteristics of its own (which every literature naturally has), all the major characteristics of the world movement. We have ceased to think of ourselves as the appointed founders of a new dispensation; we have come to demand all those aspects of life upon which our fathers deliberately turned their backs and upon the rejection of which their "new world" fantasy in all its pathos was established. Nothing endures that is based on rejections; and the American writers of the future, if they are to bring anything fresh into the world, will have to have accepted and assimilated all that the world has already known and lived. Realizing what civilization owes to their craft, they will consider the welfare of their talent as something more than an indulgence and they will seek it, and the adventure upon which talent thrives, with as little regard to the prepossessions of the tribe as to their own comfort.

THE Reviewer recommends the following recent books to the notice of readers of the *Freeman*:

"Accepting the Universe," by John Burroughs. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co.

"The Vacation of the Kelwyns," by William Dean Howells. New York: Harper and Brothers.

"Hispanic Anthology," collected and arranged by Thomas Walsh. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons.

"The Age of Innocence," by Edith Wharton. New York: D. Appleton and Co.

“But what good came of it at last?”
Quoth little Peterkin.
“Why, that I can not tell,” said he;
“But ’twas a famous victory.”

Well, the election is over and the country has been saved once more, just as it has been saved every four years within the memory of man. Confidentially, this is being written *before* Election Day, but it makes little difference whether the victor is Cox the Clarifier, or Harding, the Johnson-Lodgeite.

And now the country may calmly take the profit that accrues from upsetting business for six months, spending millions of dollars on useless speeches, special trains and carloads of good, patient white paper, and prepare for the next important “issue” with which the cuttle-fishes of privilege will dirty the political sea.

There are many citizens, however, who will be the better for the election hocus-pocus, in that they will have learned that the purpose of the quadrennial circus is merely to insure the ringmasters’ position of authority. They will have learned how important it is to support such papers as the FREEMAN which uses Roentgen rays on political methods but does not endorse any particular Dr. Thingumbob’s nostrum guaranteed to remedy all troubles from the high cost of living to chilblains.

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